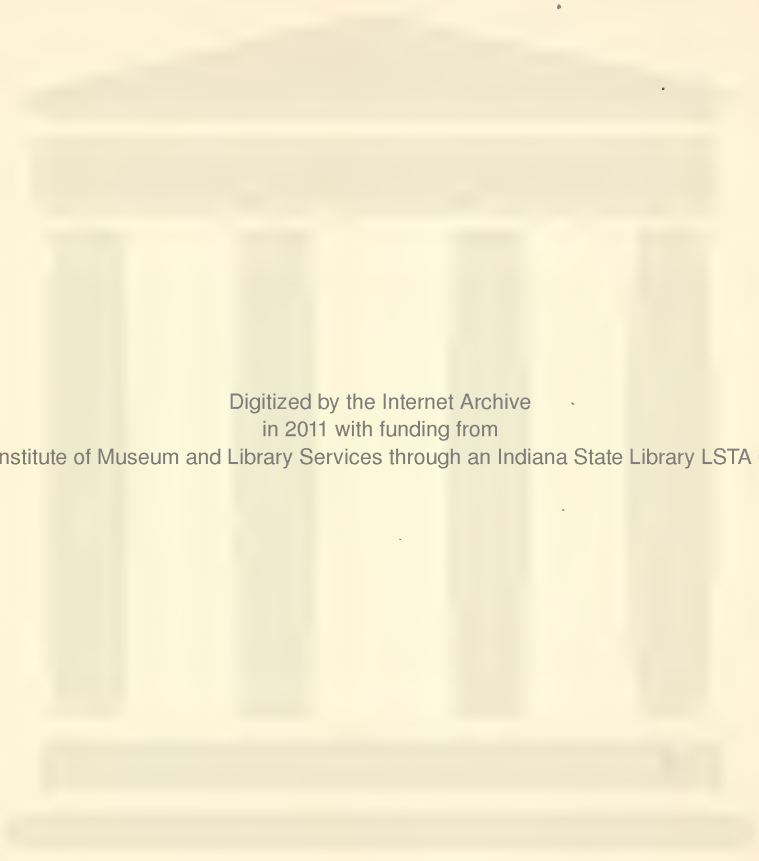


HOME LETTERS OF  
GENERAL SHERMAN

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HOME LETTERS OF  
GENERAL SHERMAN

**The Sherman Letters.** Correspondence between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891. Edited by RACHEL SHERMAN THORNDIKE. With portraits. 8vo, \$2.00

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HOME LETTERS  
OF  
GENERAL SHERMAN

EDITED BY  
M. A. DeWOLFE HOWE

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1909

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Published October, 1909



## NOTE

AFTER a process of many eliminations from a large mass of material, General Sherman's daughter, Mrs. Paul Thorndike, placed in my hands the letters from which the following selections have been made. To her and to her brother, Mr. P. T. Sherman, I am indebted for valuable assistance in preparing the letters for publication.

M. A. DEW. H.

BOSTON, *July*, 1909.





# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	1
I. THE YOUNG SOLDIER. 1836-1846 . . .	3
II. ROUND THE HORN TO CALIFORNIA. 1846	36
III. A SOLDIER IN CALIFORNIA. 1846-1850 .	83
IV. TWO YEARS IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY. 1850-1852 . . . . .	120
V. THE MAN OF BUSINESS. 1853-1859 .	133
VI. DIRECTING A SOUTHERN MILITARY SCHOOL. 1859-1861 . . . . .	160
VII. THE WAR BEGUN. 1861-1862 . . . .	196
VIII. VICKSBURG. 1863 . . . . .	234
IX. MISSISSIPPI AND GEORGIA CAMPAIGNS. 1863-1864 . . . . .	274
X. THE WAR ENDED. 1865 . . . . .	331
XI. YEARS OF PEACE. 1886-1891 . . . .	355
INDEX . . . . .	403



# HOME LETTERS OF GENERAL SHERMAN

## INTRODUCTORY

TEN years after General William Tecumseh Sherman attained the height of his military achievement he published (in 1875) his *Memoirs*, an outspoken record of his career in peace and war. Ten years later he revised the *Memoirs* in the light of the abundant comment and criticism which they called forth. When nearly two more decades had passed, one of his children gave the public (in 1904) a liberal portion of the life-long correspondence between the General and his brother, the Hon. John Sherman. Both the *Memoirs* and the *Sherman Letters* brought to the readers of such books an animating knowledge of General Sherman as a writer—forcible, individual, fearless, the very counterpart in expression of everything which the history of his country records of him in action.

Now the Civil War is in its fifth decade behind us, and the time has come for drawing upon the last considerable collection of General Sherman's writing to which the public may expect even a limited admission. These are the letters which he wrote to Ellen Boyle Ewing, who, in 1850, became his wife. To the house

of her father, the Hon. Thomas Ewing, of Ohio, he went to live as a son upon the death of his own father in 1829. The first of the letters bears the date of 1837. In 1836 the boy of sixteen had left his adopted, and adopting, home to become a cadet at West Point. Mr. Ewing was then a United States Senator from Ohio, and to his influence with the Secretary of War young Sherman owed his appointment to the military school. This debt, he would have been the first to say, was quite secondary to that of the whole-souled boy-and-girl relationship which grew into the vital devotion and confidence of man and wife. In and out of the army Sherman was of necessity long and often separated from the domestic centre in which his strong affections were deeply rooted. His letters home, therefore, were always the frank and authentic records of the events which most nearly concerned him. The historic importance of these events would of itself justify the publication of the letters. But to this must be added their biographical significance. Through their fresh illumination of an important period, and through their spontaneous revealing of the more intimate human qualities of Sherman himself, they belong to the annals both of American history and of American biography.

In passages which necessarily run parallel with passages in the *Memoirs* and the *Sherman Letters*, it will be found that the new merely supplements, but does not duplicate, what has been printed before.

# I

## THE YOUNG SOLDIER

1836—1846

FROM June of 1836 to June of 1840 Sherman was a cadet at West Point, graduating sixth out of the forty-three survivors of a class that numbered one hundred at entering the Academy. He was clearly of the fittest, and the few citations which it seems worth while to make from his West Point letters show him further to have been a healthy, affectionate boy, already committed loyally to his profession. The reader may be glad to remember that the boy, at the time of writing the first letter, was seventeen years old, and his correspondent but twelve. The six years following graduation were spent almost entirely in Southern posts, where he is seen, through his letters, to have occupied himself with the laying of firm foundations, personal and professional, for the structure of his later years. It was in this period, also, that the intimacy between him and Miss Ewing passed naturally into an engagement of marriage. The marriage itself came considerably later, when Miss Ewing's health had gained what it lacked in these early years.

[TO MISS ELLEN BOYLE EWING]

"WEST POINT, New York, *August 30, 1837.*

"I had already written and sealed an answer to your last when William Irvin<sup>1</sup> returned from furlough and satisfied my curiosity concerning so many things concerning which I had asked information that I concluded that it would be best to defer writing a little longer in order that I might give a description of our military ball and the other ceremonies that usually take place before breaking up the encampment. . . .

"William Irvin arrived last Friday at the Point after having escorted his sister up to Troy but without first bringing her here as I think he should have done, because most undoubtedly she would have liked to see the place where her brother had been for the two last and would be for the two next years; but that is none of my business. He brought me those presents, the knife from Boyle, the handkerchief from Tommy<sup>2</sup> and the pencil and candy from yourself for which I cannot too warmly express my thanks. The knife and pencil are too good for me to use, and I have wrapped them up and put them at the bottom of my trunk to be used only on special occasions. The candy was so very good, as well as the first I have seen since I left home, that I invited some of my eastern friends, who had never eaten any homade sugar before to come and taste it. They liked it so very well that they put it beyond my

<sup>1</sup> A cadet from Lancaster, Ohio.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh Boyle and Thomas Ewing, brothers of Mrs. Sherman, both of whom became prominent officers in the Union army.

power (although very desirous to do so) to reserve some for the next day.

"I am sorry that I am not able to give you a better description of the ball, not having attended. I only know that there were a great many ladies in attendance and that the room was decorated in true military style; the walls were literally covered with burnished sabres and bayonets, as well as with wreaths and flags.

"Last night the camp was illuminated and we had a royal 'stag dance' (I believe you call them country dances) on the parade ground. I think I never saw the encampment so enlivening. There were about 150 cadets dancing before a double row of candles and a great many ladies and gentlemen looking on and walking about. This morning at half past eleven we went through the ceremony of breaking up camp and marching into barracks where we are now; everything out of order, and no studying. I suppose they will give us today and tomorrow to prepare our books, etc., and that on the next day, we'll commence reciting and will continue to do so until next June when I expect to have the extreme pleasure of visiting Lancaster. . . ."

"MILITARY ACADEMY,

"WEST POINT, New York, *March* 10, 1839.

"It is now exactly one month, since the date of your last and in it you spoke of my long delay. Indeed I am ashamed of myself although not much to blame, for during our examination, and some time previous, it was absolutely necessary that my whole attention should be paid to my studies. . . ."



"The river is open again, all is life where but a few days since could only be seen heaps of ice and snow. In fact I never saw the winter break up so suddenly as this has done. Two weeks ago I crossed the river on the ice and now but a few floating pieces remain. Steamboats pass up or down almost every hour and the water is literally covered with sloops and other kinds of sail boats; the weather also is exceedingly fine. It is almost a natural impossibility to confine ourselves to our rooms. We often feel disposed to break over our imposed limits, and 'go forth' but the consequences would be of too serious a nature to admit of such an idea for a moment.

"All the talk in this part of the world now is about war with England.<sup>1</sup> Every person seems anxious for it and none more so than the very persons who would most suffer by it, the officers of the army and the corps of cadets. But ours, I fear, arises more from selfishness than true patriotism, for should war break out we would be commissioned and sent into the 'field'—at all times preferable to studying mathematics or philosophy, and it would undoubtedly prove a better school for the soldier than this. But I cannot think that England will take the same stand in this controversy that her colony has done. If, however, she does, war will be inevitable, and Capt. Ewing's Company of archers<sup>2</sup> will have a fine opportunity to display their valor and patriotism. I have no doubt that he, in his official capacity, will

<sup>1</sup> The north-eastern boundary dispute with Canada was at this time at an acute stage.

<sup>2</sup> A company of boy archers in Lancaster.



willingly volunteer the services of his little band to his country for its defence and that of its honor. I presume by this time they have become so well disciplined as to be able to astonish the veterans of Europe by the celerity and regularity of their movements. Probably your father is anxious to hear who has been selected for special minister to Great Britain. It is not absolutely known, but there is every reason to believe that J. C. Calhoun has been appointed. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

“MILITARY ACADEMY,

“WEST POINT, N. Y., *May 4, 1839.*

“. . . I am delighted that there is a probability of your coming here during the coming summer, and why shouldn't you? Will you ever have a better opportunity? Is not West Point worth visiting? Is not the scenery of the finest order in the world in its vicinity? Are there not incidents in its history that render it dear to us all? I might ask a hundred such questions which any individual who has ever been here would be compelled to answer in the affirmative. Here's Old Fort Put, in itself a curiosity, with its damp and gloomy cells, and Kosciuszko's Garden, with its jet of water and marble basin on which is inscribed the Pole's name, as also a large monument erected a long time ago by the Corps of Cadets to the same person. I might go on and enumerate many more things which have attracted every summer and probably will continue to attract

<sup>1</sup> None was sent. Schouler records the report that Webster was seriously considered.—*History of the United States*, IV, 318.

crowds of visitors, and I hope soon to learn that you and your father will be of the number next summer.

"Since the probability of a war is over the commander of the Army seems to desire some military sport anyhow, for it is the intention to concentrate nearly half the army at Brandywine Springs next summer to camp out as though in the presence of an enemy. If this be the case, of which there is little doubt, it will be the largest body of men ever congregated together for that purpose, in this country during peace. . . .

"We have had a most beautiful spring so far, and I do not remember of having seen the Point look half as well. The reason is that they have just completed the building at which they have been engaged ever since I have been here. It is a beautiful building and adds much to the general appearance of the place. The contrast makes our old barracks look ten times as dismal as ever; so much so, indeed, that they contemplate tearing them down and erecting new ones.

"I have almost despaired of ever receiving that long wished for and expected letter from your mother. I presume however she is too busily engaged to write. I intend to write to Phil<sup>1</sup> in a few days, but whether he is at home or Oxford I know not, his last being dated at Lancaster.

"Give my love to your mother, father, Abba and all. Tell Charley<sup>2</sup> that he is a hard case. I suppose by this time little Terèsa<sup>3</sup> can run about and prattle like a fine

<sup>1</sup> Philemon Ewing, Mrs. Sherman's brother.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Ewing, Mrs. Sherman's brother, later a prominent officer in the Union army.

<sup>3</sup> Theresa Ewing, Mrs. Sherman's sister.

girl. Let me once more advise you to come east this summer if you can."

"MILITARY ACADEMY,

"WEST POINT, N. Y., *August 21, 1839.*

". . . When I wrote last we were in camp, our last encampment, and its termination was celebrated in a manner to show how rejoiced we were at its being the 'last.' I wish you had been here among the very great many visitors to see it. The Ball was a grand affair, in a fine large hall, the walls decorated with wreaths of laurel and cedar, crossed swords, sabres and bayonets, and the flags of nearly all nations of the world. From the ceiling hung a great number of elegant and tasty chandeliers, and when filled with ladies and officers both naval and military in their uniforms it presented the most dazzling and brilliant appearance I ever beheld. But what most accorded with my taste was the 'Stag' dance the last evening we were in camp. The tents were illuminated, and the parade-ground in front was covered with lights, but in consequence of the wind we were not able to arrange them as nicely as we could have wished. In front of these the Corps assembled to dance a figure, similar to what we in the West term a country dance, only that each one can shuffle and cut up as much as he pleases, provided he goes through the figure. The whole presents a very picturesque appearance, so much so that it attracts always a crowd of ladies and gentlemen to the camp. Indeed that evening, although quite cold and chilly, the dancers were literally encompassed with lady spec-

tators. After this, the first class, whose last night that was to spend in a Cadets' encampment, all sang songs appropriate to the occasion. Early the next morning (yesterday) we marched into barracks where we now are comfortably situated.

"You certainly misunderstood me with regard to your mother. Although I should feel highly honored did she condescend to notice me, still, I am fully aware how slight are my claims to her regard and how many troubles and cares she must experience since you and Abba have left home.<sup>1</sup> Very often I feel my insignificance and inability to repay the many kindnesses and favors received at her hands and those of her family. Time and absence serve to strengthen the claims and to increase my affection and love and gratitude to those who took me early under their care and conferred the same advantages as they did upon their own children. Although I have rarely spoken of it still I assure you that I have always felt sincerely and deeply grateful, and hope that some event may occur to test it. Indeed I often feel that your father and mother have usurped the place which nature has allotted to parents alone, and that their children [hold] those of brothers and sisters, with regard to myself. . . ."

"MILITARY ACADEMY,

"WEST POINT, N. Y., *November 1, 1839.*

"I have been intending for some time to write to you for the purpose of acknowledging the reception of

<sup>1</sup> This letter and others in the two years immediately following were addressed to Miss Ewing at the Academy of the Visitation, Georgetown, D. C.

those slippers which you were kind enough to make for me some time since. They were brought by William Irvin. They fit exactly but are so neat and beautiful as to preclude all ideas of my ever wearing them. Indeed it would amount to sacrilege for me to do so. I will keep them carefully in remembrance of her who gave them and hope that at some time or other I will be able to present something in return as acceptable as these are to me. Why is it that you have been silent so long? Did you not receive my last, written almost immediately upon the reception of yours? I have been very anxious lest you may have been unwell or had returned home and hope that I may soon be relieved by hearing from you. I mentioned that William Irvin had brought me the slippers, but he did not come on the Point and of course I was unable to see him and have a talk about Lancaster and all the folks, which I have all along been anticipating. He is now on duty as an officer at Fort Gratiot, Michigan, within two days' journey of home. I hear from home but seldom nowadays, but it is all my fault as I am so careless and negligent myself about writing. At last accounts all were well.

"For my own part here, I am getting along very comfortably indeed—very little military duty to attend to and not much study, so that from morning to night we are laying schemes of what we intend to do next year when we graduate, and if even half of these are realized a most happy set we'll be. But should some little Indian War break out, or the Canadian Patriot rise again, or anything else interfere with our furlough upon which

all our expectations centre, we'd be in a pretty plight. Instead of dancing, hunting, fishing and the like we might be sent to some remote corner of the globe to drill drunken Irish recruits by way of serving our country. Thus you see that we live in continual hope and fear of the future, but as everyone's mind pictures the future in the brightest colors we are necessarily contented.

"I have no doubt that by this time you have entirely recovered from your homesickness, and, as the session of Congress approaches and the members and visitors arrive at the Capitol, you will no doubt find among them some acquaintances from Ohio, which will tend to render your situation much pleasanter. Indeed if Mr. Bond <sup>1</sup> of Chillicothe should take his family with him to Washington you would be peculiarly favored. I should like, above all things, to spend about a month at Washington during the session to hear and see those men who rule and direct the affairs of our government. 'Tis true I was there when on my way here for the first time, but then I was a Plebe and not capable of appreciating the many things I saw and heard. I intend to come to Washington when I graduate on my way home if I possibly can. The fact that your father once occupied a seat in the Senate, no doubt adds great interest to that beautiful place in your eyes. . . ."

After graduating at West Point in June of 1840, and spending the summer in Ohio on furlough, Sherman sailed in October for Savannah, whence he proceeded

<sup>1</sup> William Key Bond, member of the 24th, 25th, and 26th Congresses.



to join his regiment, the Third Artillery, occupying posts along the east coast of Florida. His own company was stationed at Fort Pierce on the Indian River. The gathering in of scattered Seminoles and other employments of the post are fully described in the *Memoirs*, which a single letter will serve to supplement at this point:

“FORT PIERCE, E[ast] F[lorida], *September 7, 1841.*

“I cannot express how great was my pleasure upon receiving this morning your very kind letter. I can only show my sense of it by punctuality.

“I sincerely thank you for pardoning me the apparent adherence to ceremony in my letter to you, for believe me, that no one regrets more than I the disposition of this world, to surround the sweetest and best pleasures of this life with the cold garb of formality, and if at any time I should bow to its dictates it is because I fear that a departure from them would give offence.

“You are anxious to know when you may expect to see me. Indeed I cannot tell, but it appears pretty certain that we will not leave Florida this year and when we do it seems to be the intention to post us at the Southern and Gulf posts, in which case many years may elapse before I may have the pleasure of going home. But a soldier's life is so varied that it is impossible to see even a month ahead, and possibly some occasion or opportunity may occur whereby I may have the pleasure of seeing you all at Washington. Hope is, however, a fickle staff to lean upon. All, you see, is uncertainty and depends upon the authorities at Washington.

“Although Florida is losing many of the charms which novelty inspires, still I cannot say I am very tired of staying here. We have many of the comforts of life, and what is the greatest of all blessings, good health, with just active enough kind of life to give experience to the mind, and strength to the constitution. This is also a kind of warfare which every young officer should be thoroughly acquainted with, as the Indian is most likely to be our chief enemy in times to come. You doubtless little sympathise with us in hunting and harassing a poor set of people who have had the heroism to defend their homes against such odds for such a period of time. Even an enemy must admire those qualities which have enabled the Seminole to maintain the country this long, although those qualities have been chiefly cunning and perfidy. We have had during the past year a great many here in every capacity, prisoners, captives, visitors, guides and interpreters, in all which they display the capacities with which they are endowed by nature, sharpened by the straits to which they have been accustomed from their childhood up.

“A few days since we learned that a Dutch vessel had run ashore about seventy-five miles south of this, and that the Indians had come down to the beach and stolen some beef and pork they had put ashore to live upon in case the vessel went to pieces before they were picked up. We would instantly have gone in search, but unluckily about one half the command were absent on a scout with near all our boats. They returned last evening and tomorrow we start and will doubtless be absent eight or ten days.



"I suppose but little of the turmoil and excitement of the Capitol reaches you in the peaceful and quiet halls of the Academy and reaches you though near, like it does us, as a faint, distant echo, devoid of all its original harshness. It certainly is a disgrace to Washington that the President should be insulted in his own house and burned in effigy in the face of the whole city because he differed from them in opinion.<sup>1</sup> It is to be hoped that the actors will be held up to the contempt of the world. No wonder you are anxious to go back to Lancaster, the best of homes, but I fear the four years residence in the city will wean you all from the peaceful and quiet home of the west. I wrote to Philemon not long since by a brother officer who has been stationed here for the past season and has now been ordered to West Point. I hope Phil may see him before he has left for Lancaster, which he contemplated when he last wrote to me. I likewise sent, some time ago, a box of Florida curiosities which I hope he may receive in time to take home with him. He has been my most regular correspondent and I feel under great obligations to him for his kindness and punctuality. The night is now pretty well advanced and the mosquitos very troublesome. You must therefore permit me to conclude with the hope that a very long period shall not elapse before I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you again. Give my best love to your father and mother.

<sup>1</sup> In August and September of 1841 President Tyler vetoed the First and Second Bank Bills passed by Congress, and reached the point of disagreement with leading Whigs which caused the resignation of Ewing (Secretary of the Treasury) and three other members of the Cabinet.

. . . When you write home remember me to your mother and all the family and connections. Charley and little sister will soon, or doubtless ere this have forgotten their 'Cumpy,'<sup>1</sup> and the way he used to ride them on his pony. I have a real Indian one here which I wish I could get to Charley; it would suit him so well to learn what is so essential to all persons, to ride well. I hope that you have opportunities and avail yourself of them to take a gallop across the country, and if ever I have the pleasure to come home again the first thing I will expect of you will be to mount the wildest horse and charge over the hills and plains. Next to drawing it is the most ladylike accomplishment in my mind. A brother officer, in looking over the paper a short time since, pointed out a column in which were recorded the prizes awarded to your Academy. I was very proud to see you take one, the second in Drawing.

"Good night."

On November 30, 1841, Sherman was promoted to a first-lieutenancy, and soon afterwards was assigned to a post at Picolata on the St. Johns River, straight inland some eighteen miles from St. Augustine.

"PICOLATA, East Florida, *January* 13, 1842.

". . . I cannot without entering into minute and uninteresting details give you any idea of my life for the past three months. Now at Fort Pierce, then at Lauderdale in the Everglades, in the Big Cypress on

<sup>1</sup> Nickname used by his family for Tecumseh.

the other side of the peninsula, then at Fort Dallas, back again to old Fort Pierce, all in rapid succession, and just as we supposed we would have a short respite I got an order announcing my promotion to a first lieutenancy in another company. So I had to turn about and come up to the old City of St. Augustine to report to my captain who is stationed there. By him I was ordered to take command of this post. Thus you see an entire change has taken place in my affairs, removed suddenly from the war district to this peaceable one; but the change is a very pleasant one, for I have here an independent command, have a large good house, and what is better than all, mails twice a week. . . .

“Now for a description of my post. Picolata was an old settlement before this war, consisting of a large frame building intended for a hotel for invalids, with barracks, outhouses, guard houses, stables, etc., built since the war; also a family of citizens who keep a kind of boarding house for passers by. It is situated on the St. Johns River, opposite, and eighteen miles distant from St. Augustine, between which there is a good road with a military escort twice a week. Along this road many murders have been committed but none since we took Coacoochee,<sup>1</sup> whose party had formerly infested the road. Now there is considered no danger and persons pass backwards and forwards constantly in parties of two and three. Still the escort which guards the mail is usually accompanied by the cautious.

“It is a very beautiful spot indeed. Magnificent live oak trees shade the yard, enclosing my splendid quar-

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, I, 23-26.

ters, and the St. Johns, a noble sheet of water, about one and a half miles broad, adds beauty to the whole. In fact I would much prefer being here to St. Augustine, for 'tis like being in the country with all the advantages of both town and country, for with a good horse I can ride over at any time in a couple of hours, get books, see the ladies, etc.

"St. Augustine, you know, is the oldest town in the North American continent, nor does its appearance belie its age. An old fort overlooks the town with its narrow crooked streets. The houses are low, close and dirty except some few built by Americans since the purchase of Florida from Spain.

"The best society of the place is made of American families who, from its delightful climate, have made it their home, and some few old English families. The Spaniards or Minorcans, with some few exceptions, are ignorant but very pretty, with beautiful hair and eyes which have so allured many officers, who have been a long while [so] exiled from the world that, in spite of their good sense, they have been captivated. In fact as many as a dozen or twenty officers have been married at St. Augustine, so that there are but few 'aspirantes.' But they play so desperate a game that the least penetrating cannot but perceive it. One thing cannot be questioned. Their Spanish dance is most beautiful, graceful and enchanting, and the ladies know how to dance, nor do they seem ever to weary of it. At the Barracks they had a ball the evening I was in town, and although I did, in fact *could*, not participate yet I admired it very much—much more the beauty of

the ladies themselves, and should we remain here many months I must certainly make an attempt to learn the Spanish dance. I have nearly filled my sheet without telling you our prospects of going out of Florida. A long time ago we were ordered to garrison the posts on the Gulf of Mexico so soon as Colonel Worth<sup>1</sup> could spare our services. Of course we have been waiting till his decision was made known, and when we met his Mightiness on the Big Cypress did not fail to ask him when we would be ordered out. He said between 'the 10th and 15th of this month,' but as this time has arrived I fear he has forgotten his promise, neither do I think he should send us out till the Campaign is over. However, when the order comes it always is unexpected, and I have no doubt we'll all be turned about and sent off at a tangent, and the first thing we'll know we'll be on our way to the Gulf. When we do I'll be stationed at Mobile. . . ."

In February of 1842 came the anticipated orders to Mobile, and there Sherman remained until June.

"FORT MORGAN, MOBILE POINT,

*"April 7, 1842.*

"... But why don't I leave the Army? you ask. Why should I? It is the profession for which my education alone fits me, and as all appearances indicate the rapid approach of a time when the soldier will be

<sup>1</sup> William Jenkins Worth, made brigadier-general, March 1, 1842, for his services as commander of the forces in the war against the Florida Indians.

required to do his proper labor, when a splendid field will be spread before him, every reason exists why I should remain. Moreover, I am content and happy, and it would be foolish to spring into the world bare-handed and unprepared to meet its coldness and trials. Moreover, not a day passes without my meeting some old fellow who once was an officer but was persuaded by friends or a prospect of immediate wealth to abandon a life for which his early habits and aspirations fitted him, and all with very few exceptions say it was the most foolish act of their life. Believing myself similarly constituted, I intend, of course, to wait a more auspicious moment than the present to abandon my present life.

“You speak so liberally and feelingly upon the subject of religion that I must satisfy a curiosity that you must have felt. Since I left home six years ago I have practiced or professed no particular creed, believing firmly in the main doctrines of the Christian Religion, the purity of its morals, the almost absolute necessity for its existence and practice among all well regulated communities, to assure peace and good will amongst all. Yet I cannot, with due reflection, attribute to minor points of doctrine or form the importance usually attached to them. I believe in good works rather than faith, and believe them to constitute the basis of true religion, both as revealed in Scripture and taught by the experience of all ages and common sense. You see that my ideas are very general and subject to be moulded to a definite shape by time, circumstances and experience. . . .



“Although matters of religion is a source of much discussion amongst us, I think I have written more on this page upon the subject than I ever did before. I have got into so serious a train that I fear I will not be able to tell you of the thousand and one things I thought I would of my last visit to Mobile, the people I met, etc., etc. Suffice to say that the ladies of Mobile, feeling as they ever do for the desolate state of us woe-begone bachelors, took pity upon us and made the gentlemen charter a steam-boat to come down to see us. How kind! So upon the first day of this month they played us a most precious trick. Landing at our wharf, they marched bodily into the very heart of the citadel and carried the fort by storm. Imagine our surprise to find about one hundred ladies and gentlemen descend, as it were, from the clouds. But after our surprise was fairly over, we showed them the various points of the fort—the guns, embrasures, casemates, etc., etc., and after we had exhausted our means of hospitality, were invited on board the boat, where they had a band of music, wine, refreshments, etc., etc. Not satisfied with this, they played their batteries so well that they prevailed upon five out of the seven officers to go up to the city with them, myself among the number. It would take a volume to record their kindness, to name the ladies, their beauties and accomplishments. Three of the officers stayed only one day and returned, but another and myself spent six days, and a more delightful time you could not imagine. We were invited everywhere and the bright button was a passport at all times to the houses of the best. Temperance and tem-

perance processions (in which the ladies took part), balloon ascensions, visits of an Ex-president and Sec'y Paulding, theatres, paintings, etc., were some of the attractions, but where I was delighted most was in the country.

"Mary Keeler has a sister, Mrs. Bull, who resides about two miles in the country—one of the most delightful spots imaginable. I had received a letter from her sister in Brooklyn, with whom I correspond, and who insisted that I should call. I did so, of course, and found a most delightful family,—Mr. Bull, a fine man—merchant—and my cousin, a most charming woman with a family of three lovely children. Imagine what a chance! to be welcomed as one long known into such a family; to be made, as it were, at home so soon after returning from the roving life in Florida. They insisted upon my making it my home whenever I should visit Mobile. Think of a fine well painted house, with a portico in front—with roses of every hue, and shape, and size, and color, creeping over it, in all directions—approached by a walk, shaded by lovely flowers and shrubbery, and an air of quiet and *Home* spread over all, that rendered it a perfect paradise to me. And the strawberries and cream—but I can't talk of them for want of space, for I must tell you of our delightful rides! But as I see I'll have to cross this, I may as well first give you a general description of Mobile Port. On the river it resembles any other business city, but as you leave the wharves and go back, you find beautiful streets of hotels, stores, shops, etc., all as gorgeously ornamented as at New York. A little further back,



the streets are ornamented with trees; and in front of the houses a little garden bed, now and then, shows a profusion of roses and shrubs; a little further and they begin to assume a beauty, neatness and comfort, I never anywhere beheld. These houses are the residences of merchants, residing in town, and as nothing can be more delightful than after a hard day's work, amongst dirty cotton bales, presses, carts, drays, etc., to go home to a beautiful quiet home, they spare no pains or expense in furnishing and ornamenting their residences and grounds adjacent. The houses are mostly white, with piazzas all round, with all kinds of roses and flowers creeping up the latticed portico. They are generally situated one or two hundred yards back from the road, or rather street, with a carriage road to the very door, passing under an arbor of shade trees. In all other respects, each exercises his own taste and judgment and thereby have created for Mobile the most beautiful suburbs and country seats in this country. . . ."

Sherman's next station was Fort Moultrie in Charleston Harbor, and here he remained for nearly four years. The *Memoirs* show what a varied knowledge of the South he acquired during this period, not only through his Charleston associations, but also from the journeys he made to Georgia, Alabama and elsewhere in fulfillment of military duties. The letters represented in the following passages speak of many points of personal interest and development.

"FORT MOULTRIE, S. Carolina,

"November 28, 1842.

". . . Not long since I took a notion into my head that I could paint. I went to the city and laid in a full set of artist's equipments, prepared my studio, and without any instructions whatever have finished a couple [of] landscapes and faces which they tell me are very good. I have great love for painting and find that sometimes I am so fascinated that it amounts to pain to lay down the brush, placing me in doubt whether I had better stop now before it swallows all attention, to the neglect of my duties, and discard it altogether, or keep on. What would you advise? . . ."

"FORT MOULTRIE, S. C., February 8, 1844.

". . . For nearly four years I had been exceedingly diligent in not writing to your father, but the other day, I did so for the purpose of asking him to let Boyle under certain contingencies come and spend the winter and spring with me. This day I got his answer, which was very kind but wound up with a hope that I was studying for 'Civil life.' Now I thought he had long since relinquished that idea and his opposition to the army. He knows my perfect dependence, and that were I to resign, I would have to depend upon some one till I could establish myself in the practice of some profession. Do you think I could do so? Certainly not, and should health be preserved to me, I shall never depend upon anybody, nay, not even were he a brother. I would rather earn my living by the labor of my own hands. Beside I have now studied for the military profession,

and hold a place envied by thousands and for which hundreds of the best young men of this country toil every year. It would then be madness itself at this late day to commence something new. If Susan<sup>1</sup> has not hid our Bible you will see that this day completes my 24th year. . . .”

The next letter has much to do with Sherman's future, especially in its relation to Miss Ewing, and shows that his benefactor's wishes were not wholly disregarded. “You know,” he says, “that I am endeavoring so to qualify myself that should you not like to encounter the vicissitudes that I am now liable to, I may be enabled to begin life anew in a totally different sphere.” The single longer passage to be taken from the letter reveals one of the efforts toward self-improvement:

“FORT MOULTRIE, S. C., *June* 14, 1844.

“. . . After casting about me and some reflection I have seized upon a book that young lawyers groan over—Blackstone, and I have with avidity swallowed its contents and shall continue to study and read hard all summer instead of idling my time in securing friends temporary and changing. I do not want many friends and have never met with any that have so complete hold on my heart as my oldest and best, and therefore shall so guard my intercourse with the world as to become attached to none, save those with whom I may be associated in life for a long period. But as to the

<sup>1</sup> A sister of Sherman's.

Law. Somehow or other I do not feel as though I would make a good lawyer, although I meet with but little difficulty in mastering the necessary book knowledge. Yet not being naturally fitted for public speaking, and my education being such as to give me almost a contempt for the bombast and stuff that form the chief constituents of Modern Oratory, it would not seem that my prospect in that quarter were very brilliant; yet honesty and industry could not but secure a competence. . . .”

“FORT MOULTRIE, S. C., *September 17, 1844.*

“. . . Rumor too says that there is a decided war spirit at Washington caused by a late message from Texas and a report that England is supplying Mexico with arms and munitions of war to enable her to capture Texas. Newspapers have been crying war so much that nobody will believe them when there is real danger. Should there be the least foundation for such reports, they will soon be made public, and if any movement of troops is made in consequence, ours will surely go to Galveston. But it is all surmise as yet, and I do not believe there is a shadow of chance for so fortunate a war. War as such is to be deprecated, but if it is necessary for the interests or honor of the country of course I may with perfect propriety rejoice at the opportunity of being able to practice what in peace we can only profess. But I never believe that we are to have a war that costs money. Our Government talks and bullies a good deal, but when they talk of money they are frightened. Without it, war cannot be carried

on. No doubt you are in the midst of election excitements<sup>1</sup> and have to grieve at the constant absence of your father. For his sake I do really wish the elections over and that Clay may be our President, but it is my belief that such will not be the case. I am not very sanguine. The people of this country are truly sovereign and, like such, are fickle in the extreme, varying from one party to the other without rhyme or reason. I call myself a Whig and usually in conversation advocate their claims, for the simple reason that my family and friends belong to that party; but as long as I hold a commission in the service of the government it is my intention and duty to abstain from any active part in political matters and discussions, and for that reason I never permit myself to become interested in the success of either party. Like a veteran of our service who has served and fought under every President once remarked in his native Dutch tongue, 'I've fought for every chief magistrate, Washington and all. I've heard all branded as liars and scoundrels, eulogized as patriots and statesmen, but for his part he thought all bad enough for him.' Here in Carolina we have no politics except now and then a blow out like Nullification, which ends in smoke. . . ."

"FORT MOULTRIE, S. C., *June 9, 1845.*

"I am now officer of the guard. All of my comrades are away at a small party at the other end of the island, whilst I alone sit here in dead silence, listening to the echo of the sentinel's monotonous tread as he walks

<sup>1</sup> In the campaign which ended with Polk's election.

his post in the archway that pierces our battlements. Where my thoughts are you can tell, and to her I devote the night. Would that for a few short hours you could enjoy it, sitting on our piazza by the faint light of the new moon, listening to the rustling surf of the sea, and cooled by the fresh breeze that comes over the ocean. It is truly a lovely night when one may sit for hours and enjoy undisturbed that gentle quiet and repose that resembles a life of dreams rather than actual existence in this rascally world. I've got to sit up all night and see that no enemies disturb the peace, but, luckily or unluckily, we have no enemies and therefore keep awake merely to become accustomed to the rough usage to which we are so liable, in case of war. A book serves to while away the time until all the letters mingle together and the reader spins his own drowsy tale and flatters himself that it is all written down and likely does not discover his error till a hitch of his neck or a tumble from his chair convinces him that he slept. I do not feel sleepy at all, therefore shall write on, though I have naught to say. I have already acknowledged the receipt of your letter in part answer to my last long one, and am now patiently expecting its sequel when you shall hear from me again. . . .

"I went to Charleston Sunday and found the city all agog on account of intelligence direct from Mexico that that Government, backed by British authority, had declared war against this; but at the time I gave it little belief, and subsequent information from New Orleans confirms my disbelief. The way the rumor came was this. The British vessel of war *Eurydice*



arrived at New Orleans from Vera Cruz, with a person by name of Mun [?] bearing dispatches to the English minister at Washington, which dispatches are destined to England. Some inquisitive fellows in the city learned Mr. Mun's character, and no doubt bored him with questions, till he in self defence said that war was already or soon would be declared. This was deemed authentic and the evening paper was full of it, but now it is known that up to the time of the sailing of that vessel there was no definite news at Vera Cruz. No doubt the Mexicans feel hostile towards us and merely want the ability to support a war to openly declare it. I have no doubt that there is some underhanded work between the English government and that of Mexico to secure the independence of Texas, provided she will abolish slavery, but a Congress will assemble on the 4th of July in Texas which will decide the question, and as there seems little doubt that the result will be for annexation, then it is possible that Mexico may resort to force. But she is unable to carry on war, her government is hardly secure, their provinces are rebelling, and it will require all her force and influence to maintain their own dependants. I see that already there is some difficulty as to the boundary line, but Texas will have to define clearly her claims, and it is much doubted whether she will be received into our confederacy if she is impudent to advance her frontier to the Rio Grande. I would give anything in the world to go down there and seriously contemplate exchanging into an infantry regiment now in Louisiana. I could easily effect a transfer, but I feel loth to quit the 3rd,

to which I feel much attached; besides, I feel a decided preference for artillery to infantry service in time of actual war. We have mounted most of our guns and our little fort presents quite a savage aspect as the grim bull dogs peer over the parapet as though anxious to do their duty right away. I have almost written a complete military letter, but that must not be wondered at as I am in uniform with sword, etc., surrounded by all the paraphernalia of my profession. . . .

"Do you correspond with Mrs. William Anderson now? If you do, you may say that Robert Anderson's<sup>1</sup> wife is rapidly improving in health. She is always busy about her house and not infrequently walks out to see her friends. The other day, her husband being busy, I escorted her to the city and had quite a shopping tour, and we brought back plenty of ice cream and cake, off of which we made quite a pleasant evening. . . . I don't know when I was more amused than to see her sitting on a rock by the seashore screaming almost with childish delight at the big Newfoundland dog, which ran into the surf and brought to her the stick which she threw into the water. Her husband, the captain, is a man of great taste and has quite a pretty collection of paintings and a most expensive selection of engravings which I love to look over. No sooner do I enter the house than the servant brings me one of the large volumes as naturally as he would a chair, and I am privileged to devote to it as much time as I choose, which I highly prize here where in visiting one is com-

<sup>1</sup> Captain Robert Anderson, later the defender of Fort Sumter, was at this time Sherman's superior officer in the Third Artillery at Fort Moultrie.



pelled to be silent or join in the gossip and scandal that idleness begets. You say you will have your revenge on me. Now I think if you pretend to follow me through these pages I will have accomplished my complete revenge first, for certainly I could not award you a severer punishment. . . .”

“FORT MOULTRIE, S. C.,

“*January 31, 1846.*

“. . . All apprehension of war with England seems to have subsided, and no occupation is left us but the proposed invasion of Mexico, which holds out but a slim prospect to a military aspirant. If Mr. Slidell is sent from Mexico, and that nation throws every obstacle in the way to an adjustment of boundary with the United States, it will be incumbent upon our Government to compel her to it, or to proclaim our boundary and maintain it by military force. I have not the least idea what will be the course pursued, but I know that the President has ordered the troops to be kept in readiness at Corpus Christi to await the issue of events. Mexico may threaten again under her new government, but her threats are likely to end in the same words and inactivity as heretofore; nor would it surprise anybody if as soon as Gen. Parédes has fairly established himself in power, that he would see the absolute necessity of making some definite arrangement with this country which will remove the last warlike bone of contention that we have. So, upon the whole, the prospect of a peaceful year is strong, and it therefore becomes me to make all possible preparation to leave the service. . . .

“The coming month is the grand time of festivity in Charleston. It is the time fixed by custom for the planters to throng the city for all public balls and the races. I have already received an invitation to attend a wedding party on Thursday next, and a public ball a few days after, but I doubt much whether I shall attend either unless it should be incumbent on me so to do, to do my share of party going, for as we are invited principally on account of our profession we are compelled some of us to go, if for no other purpose than to acknowledge the compliment. On Sunday last . . . I attended both Church and Vespers at the Cathedral. Mr. Lynch preached on the Neck, some distance from the place where our ferry boat lands. The text was, ‘He came to his own and his own received him not,’ and the sermon opened with a very pretty peroration on family affection, how a person, however much he may have drawn upon himself the envy and malice of the world, whenever he turned to his own family would experience those endearing attentions that would make him forget the cares of life; but should they too reject him, how miserable would he be. Then followed the history of Christ, a Jew, fulfilling the prophecy of this Patriarch and illustrating all that is perfect in life by his doctrines, miracles and deeds. His claims upon the Jews, to their gratitude, was perfect; and yet not only did they not receive him, but they persecuted, tortured and crucified him. How great their sin! And yet they had been taught to expect a different sort of Savior, one invested with worldly power to rescue them from the servile bondage to which they were reduced. They

thought he blasphemed their law, their God, they tried him by their common custom, and condemned him to the common death of a felon. They knew not what they did! Therein was a palliation. But how different with us, who have not only the testimony that influenced the Jews, but that which has accumulated for 1800 years till doubt is rendered certainty by the unparalleled spread of the faith, by the innate truth of his preaching, and all the evidence the church has collected together. If at this age we reject him, we are far more guilty than the Jews, for we know what we do. Then followed a description of what is meant by receiving the Savior, not in the mere acknowledgement of the divinity of his mission, a silent assent to the truths of his faith, or a bare conformity to the rules of the Church, but an actual, conscientious reception of the spirit of the faith and a zealous, hearty cooperation with all the measures that are resolved upon by Christ's disciples and representatives on earth. This is, of course, but a bare outline of the sermon, which was long and embraced much feeling and many figures of speech. The Vespers were as usual, but the singing not as good as usual. . . .

"The news of your improving health fills me with the brightest hopes and I trust that after the reception of your next, the future will not be darkened by the smallest speck of apprehension or fear. You shall hear from me as soon as it is received and for the present I must beg you to excuse the length of this which was not intended."

In the spring of 1846, Sherman was ordered north, and before the first news of warfare with Mexico

startled the country, he was engaged in recruiting service with headquarters at Pittsburg. Late in May he heard of the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and precipitately offered himself for active service. His method was indeed so precipitate that he met with a rebuff; but this was soon followed by the order which brought the first chapter of his military career to an abrupt close, and gave to the next one an unexpected color. The following letter sets forth the situation with clearness:

"PITTSBURGH, Pa., *June 30, 1846.*

"I sat up till 2 o'clock last night and am now writing by the first dawn of day, but what can I say in the few moments spared me? When I was delaying in Lancaster an order was upon my table which must determine my future destiny. Ordered to California by Sea round Cape Horn! Is not this enough to rouse the most placid? Indeed it is so great an event that I cannot realize it in its full force. I start this morning and shall be ruined if the ship has sailed, but unless their orders are peremptory they will wait for me, I know. I have merely thrown a few things in my valise and leave all else in confusion to be packed up and sent to Zanesville, where I want Phil to have it sent for. He will have notice of its being sent after I am fairly afloat. The book case is my pet and will, I trust, receive a few caresses from you. It is left with all its memorandums, etc., to tell a tale for or against me. Your letters I leave in their places as I know they are sacred and will not be touched till the case comes to hand. I ought to

take a few with me, for you have let me go forth upon a wild and long expedition without any token, any memento save a small lock o' hair that has been guarded when all else was neglected. Your miniature, how it would be prized now, but you will give it to me when we meet in Cincinnati. Can you say when that will be?

"The route usually pursued by vessels bound to the Pacific is from New York to Madeira, Rio Janeiro, Cape Horn, Valparaiso, and destination. Ours is California with a single company of artillery to meet an expedition from Missouri. It will be a happy coincidence if we meet them at all, but I do not permit myself to look deep into the future; others must do that for us. All we can do is to obey our orders spiritedly and cheerfully. The hardest part to me is that we can no longer communicate by letter, and that I have not seen Mother. What will she think of me? What will the family think? The little coincidences that offered to my mind ready excuses are now lost, and I away, unable to explain them. But this is no time to think. If another opportunity offers to make amends it must be done. . . . I have the fullest confidence in the officers with whom I am to go, and believe I shall be benefitted in every way by the change. We shall be pioneers at least in a far off world. . . ."

## II

### ROUND THE HORN TO CALIFORNIA

1846

THE chief incidents of the voyage to California are recorded both in the *Memoirs* and in the *Sherman Letters*. Yet the wealth of descriptive detail in the letters to Miss Ewing gives them an historical value which justifies the preserving of liberal extracts. The reader, familiar with the reports of life on modern war-ships rounding the Horn, may draw his own comparisons. This experience of Sherman's may be further related to the present by a citation from a letter written during the voyage to his sister Elizabeth: "If you hear about a subscription opening to dig a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, you may put me down any amount, for really I do not fancy a voyage of twenty-four thousand miles to accomplish a distance of less than two thousand."<sup>1</sup>

The *Lexington* sailed July 14, 1846.

"ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES SHIP *Lexington*,"

"Monday, July 12, 1846.

"I wrote you a hasty note today enclosed in one to Phil. Now, however, I am on board the ship that is to be my home for many a long month. I have a good

<sup>1</sup> *Sherman Letters*, p. 34.



state-room in company with my old friend Ord.<sup>1</sup> A chest of drawers with a small board to hold a basin constitute the entire furniture. This is one of about eight such all opening into a kind of passage called the ward room.

"The Captain's cabin is just behind ours, and all in front, between decks, is fitted up with temporary shelves, whereon our men are stored. Upon the whole the arrangements are as comfortable as possible for sea.

"There will be four Naval officers and six of the Army in the ward room, making a very comfortable mess. A caterer was selected some days since, and he has laid in a supply of ham, salt beef and crackers enough to last till we get to Rio Janeiro. The Government has been exceedingly liberal in the supply to us, that is in furnishing tools and machinery which upon our arrival will enable us to work to advantage, saw mills and flour mills, small sizes but sufficient to spare our men the excessive labor usually imposed on men sent on expeditions of this kind. If we will have to fight we are amply provided with arms and munitions. Of these things probably you little think, but we are compelled to, else our condition would be wretched indeed. By foresight, however, the greatest evils may be avoided. That we are to take possession of some point in California there is no doubt—San Francisco perhaps. A port, if guarded and supplied with such articles as ships need, would soon become of vast importance. Now, apart from the mere fact that we will be usurpers, do you not think it will be a great thing to

<sup>1</sup> Edward O. C. Ord, later Major-General U. S. A.

be the pioneers in such a move, to precede the flow of population thither and become one of the pillars of the land? . . .”

“August 3, Ship *Lexington* at Sea.

“The day is beautiful, and our good or bad ship is pitching along at a good rate which soon must carry us upon the high road that leads from Africa and Asia to the United States. We have now been out twenty days, and though many vessels have passed within view none have been near enough to hail. The officers say, however, that soon we must meet some, and if we are desirous of sending word back home we had better be prepared. Need I say that I am, for though the days have glided by so smoothly as to leave no space between the departure and the present, yet the certainty of the vast journey before us, bids me be prepared. You of course cannot be sufficiently familiar with the arrangements on board a ship to form a rational idea of my position, but yet books make you familiar with the phrases I may be forced to use. The Ship *Lexington* was built for war purposes, rated as a sloop of war to carry twenty guns, ship-rigged and all the necessary appendages to give a warlike appearance. Upon trial she proved herself too slow for such purpose and was converted into a store-ship to carry stores of all kinds to the Pacific or other squadrons. Six guns were still left for her own defence. These are on the upper deck, called the spar deck. This deck is a strong floor, covering the vessel in its whole length and is surrounded by the bulwarks about breast high. Through this



deck there are several square hatchways, with steps leading down to the next deck called the berth deck. Beneath this deck is the cargo, and magazines. Our cargo is very heavy as we carry out so many heavy guns for California service, and the magazine of the ship could not contain half our powder which amounts to about eight hundred barrels.

"The berth deck is therefore our house—that part of it forward of the main (middle) mast is appropriated to the soldiers and sailors, the former in fixed bunks, and the latter in swung hammocks. The after [part], or behind the main mast, is divided into two parts, the ward room and cabin. The latter is the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Captain.

"The ward room is a kind of passage way fifteen feet broad, with eight state rooms, four on each side, each containing two berths just large enough to hold one person. Lieut. Ord and I have one of the best and have a bureau in common. The rest of the ward room officers are paired off two and two, but we are seldom in these narrow rooms, except to sleep, but lounge upon the quarter-deck or at the table where I now am writing. This is the mess table in the ward room and it is around it that we all gather twice a day—breakfast at eight and dinner at four, no supper. You may feel a little curious at some of our little details and therefore will I even tell you what is our usual meal. Tea and coffee for breakfast with hard tack (biscuit) and butter, with cold ham or tongue, and occasionally boiled rice or hominy. For dinner we usually have boiled ham, hot or cold, boiled rice, boiled corned beef,

soup of peas or chicken, and dessert of apple (dried) pie or a pudding called (dough) duff—flour, raisins, etc., boiled in a bag. There you have all the elements of the larder, and may vary them in the same manner that we do to add zest to the meal. I forgot to add that we have a coop full of chickens and half a dozen pigs aboard which are the happiest and most comfortable beings aboard. All from the Captain to the lowest hand is put on allowance of one gallon of water a day, which must answer for cooking, washing and drinking. Of course but little is left for washing and we give our faces a rub each day with a promise to scour when the sun becomes less hot and our throats less dry. Salt water is not good to use as it is harsh and unpleasant till one gets used to it. Fortunately I have been to sea so often that these restrictions did or do not seem an inconvenience, nor have I been in the least sea-sick since leaving New York.

“The spar deck is divided also into two parts like the berth deck, the forward part assigned to the men, and the after part or quarter-deck to the officers. Over this when the sun is hot are awnings spread, rendering a most pleasant place to read. We have many books aboard of all kinds, but our voyage will be so long that we will be forced to read even the tables in Bowditch. I wish I could give you a picture of this upper deck as it now exists: the sun bright and beautiful and the sky unobscured save by a few fleecy clouds; the wind just stiff enough to allow of all sail set, the vessel barely rising and sinking upon the gentle swell, a motion agreeable to all save sea-sick passengers of whom fortu-

nately now we have none on board. Stand with me on the quarter-deck and cast your eyes up at the sails as they tower over each other, gently swelling out with the stays and halliards all taut, and gradually let them follow the masts to the deck with its coils of rope hanging from the belaying pins; the long-boat lashed fast with the whale-boat inside; on the bows a group of soldiers in all attitudes and postures discussing the future and California; all about sailors in the bare feet and loose dress, fixing and scraping and coiling; anything except idleness, and as you look farther aft, the guard with their white belts on, nodding and walking to and fro to seem watchful. Near them are seated four women, with their stools, needle and thread, working as easily and quietly as though on terra firma. They are the wives of four of our men and are the pioneers to a new land. At first they were very sick but now are cheerful and contented. There are but two children to whom the sailors are fast teaching all the oaths in their calendar. At last you come to the quarter-deck and see near you a sailor standing at a wheel with spokes which he is constantly turning round with his eye upon the compass, before him.

“Backwards and forwards walks the officer of the deck with trumpet in hand through which the commands are given to the sailors up in the rigging. All round and in the quarter-boats in all attitudes and postures may be seen the officers reading, talking or ruminating. Thus day after day passes with no variations save those created by a change of wind, of which we have had sufficient, from the calm to a half-gale; but all these are

forgotten so soon as a fair wind fills our sails and the gurgling of water under the stern tells of rapid progress.

"A man fell from the fore-top during a storm but was not killed, and another has turned crazy from the thoughts of parting from friends. One steward and cook have each had punishment for delinquencies, and as you may want to know how it is done I will endeavor to give it. A sailor offends, he is called to the main mast on deck where the offence is investigated by the Captain, who if he thinks proper orders punishment. All hands are summoned to witness punishment, the person is tied by the hands and feet and twelve blows inflicted on his back by the boatswain. All parties are dismissed and the matter forgotten. A record of it is kept and sent to the Secretary of the Navy at the end of the cruise. Our Captain Bailey<sup>1</sup> is very mild and has ordered punishment upon but two, they negroes who fully deserved it.

"In consequence of the immense quantity of powder on board the greatest precautions are taken against fire. Sentinels are posted at the cook's galley which is near the bow of the ship, and at night sentinels are at each of the necessary lamps. All lights are prohibited in the ward room after ten at night, and cigar smokers have to go forward of the foremast. I have quit it altogether and have not touched a cigar since aboard. The reason was, it hurt my breast and I gave it up before leaving Pittsburgh and already experience relief. The habit shall never be resumed, though nowhere is the temptation so great as on ship-board where one has so

<sup>1</sup>Theodorus Bailey, later Rear-Admiral U. S. N.; with Farragut at New Orleans.

much time hanging heavily upon his hands. We are now in Latitude 34 degrees, longitude 37 degrees 52', which by the map you will see is well out in the ocean, more than 2,000 miles from New York. At the same rate it will take us about fifty-seven or sixty days to Rio Janeiro. We were in hopes the Captain would run over to Madeira or the Cape DeVerdes, but he has orders to touch at no place but Rio Janeiro and Valparaiso, unless pushed for wood and water, of which we have yet a sufficiency. If we do go to Port Praya I will send this from there. At Rio we will stay from five to ten days during which I will try hard to see all I can of the city and suburbs, of which you shall hear; the same at Valparaiso. Tell me, if ever you get an opportunity to write, if you do not think me right under the circumstances to come on an expedition that holds out so fair a chance to see the world and take part in the events that must mark this period of time.

"All authors seem to agree that the part of California we are going to is a perfect paradise and should belong to the United States. If no violence be done to the present inhabitants of that country and our government can make a plausible pretext for the capture of the country, then need we not scruple at the part we take, more especially as we encounter and endure much to accomplish it; but I will not look to the future but endeavor to confine my thoughts to the present till some better clue is opened to give a glimpse at the destiny and destination of the expedition.

"You have Frémont's *Expedition* on the parlor table. Look at the map and you will see Monterey and

San Francisco with the back country. It is in that region that I believe we shall be for some time. . . .

"*August 7.*—Two vessels are now in sight and from our positions we may possibly communicate. If either be for the U. States, it shall bear this to you. . . .

"*August 8.*—How provoking! Neither ship would vary her course and so did not come near us. So my sheet still remains open. The variable winds of the two past days have given place to a fine breeze from the north east and we are now sailing free to the south east. The reason we keep so much to the eastward is, because the prevailing winds on and south of the equator are from the east, so that the further we go in this direction the fairer they will be for us. All well except the cat, a poor little kitten that finds few friends, but its sickness this morning excites no little sympathy and if medicine can aid it, it may live to see better times.

"*Noon, August 8.*—Sail in sight straight ahead; may board her. All well, fine day and fair wind. Lat. 28°, 13'; Lon. 33°, 46'. Be careful to direct my letters in full with as many titles as possible to insure its not stopping by the way. This is a budget to be sure and I have a notion to destroy it and merely send a line, but you will make all due allowances. The sea is uncertain, so I will leave the balance blank for another chance should this fail."

"AT SEA, *August 28, 1846.*

"This day we crossed the equator on Longitude 16°, with a fine south east wind which soon must take us to Rio Janeiro, whence my next letter must be mailed.



This day is usually among sailors a species of April fools' day when all sorts of practical jokes are enacted upon the persons of those who have never crossed the Line.

"Old Neptune usually mounts the bow of the ship dripping with his brine and accompanied by his beautiful wife. They then proceed to initiate the novices. Our ship is a *war* vessel and such irregularities are not permitted, and it was forbidden to our men for the simple reason that those who have been south of the equator bear too small a proportion to the fresh men that Old Neptune's decrees might not be enforced by his accepted children. The ship was pronounced on the equator at eight this forenoon when I was summoned to the Captain's cabin where a holystone (piece of hard stone used for cleaning decks) was presented for me to rest my hand upon when the following oath was administered by the Captain in person: 'You do swear that you will not chew pig-tail when you can get good cavendish, that you will not eat hard tack when you can get soft bread, unless you like the hard best, that you will not kiss the maid instead of the mistress, unless you like the maid best, and in all other things comport yourself like a true son of Neptune. So help you salt water,'—a dash of which was sprinkled in my face. I was then duly initiated, and in my turn administered the same oath to all of our officers on the quarter deck, taking care to baptise them well in salt water.

"This is the only ceremony which distinguishes this day from any other, and now as we consult the charts and maps there appears a dark magic line separating



us from our friends and homes. This must again be crossed after weeks of sailing around Cape Horn. I sent my last letter by a French bark, the only vessel that we have sent a boat aboard though we have met great numbers. That bark was bound for Havre and according to our calculations you should receive a letter by the middle of September, about the time I will arrive at Rio. Forty-six days have now passed since our departure and looking back upon them nothing is seen that will leave an impression save the monotonous flight of time. One night, and a beautiful one it was, when all were asleep save the officer of the deck and the men on the lookout, there appeared right in front of us, like the flying Dutchman, a nice pretty little brig, long, low and painted black, piratical like and suspicious. She came quite close and tried to pass our bows, but could not without coming in contact when she, the smaller, would have been sunk. Again and again she tried to cross our bows, we moving majestically along without varying our course. Her motions appearing suspicious she was hailed but gave no answer, when all of us were roused and ordered on deck, our men with their muskets and the sailors at their guns.

“As we lay close alongside in the bright moonlight, each vessel gliding noiselessly through the water, with no apparent animation on board of the brig, one could not but think of the stories of slaves and pirates. When all was ready again she was hailed in English, French and Spanish and ordered to stand clear or a shot would be sent aboard. Such jabbering as arose from her was never heard, her history and place of destination were

soon made known, she fell astern, and soon again we were all sleeping away as quiet as ever.

"Her attempting to cross our bows was doubtless accidental and in a dark night would certainly have been fatal to all on board of her. She was bound to Pernambuco and may have been freighted with slaves, but that was not our business and no delay was permitted.

"*August 29.*—Was interrupted yesterday by the servants clearing our only table for dinner, but it makes but little difference as I am determined to fill the sheet as a letter to be despatched upon our arrival at Rio. The wind is now blowing fiercely from the eastward, and the astronomical instruments have just put us 2 degrees, 23' to the south of the Equator, distance made in the last twenty-four hours 179 miles—steamboat speed which if continued will soon show us land again.

"No wonder sailors soon incur a sort of contempt for land, when for months they live without a peep of it. The weather is delightful, not at all hot, far less so than it was when we left New York. Woolen clothing is not uncomfortable and a blanket at night is not rejected. We have moonlight nights now, and we usually assemble upon camp stools at night, with the clear sky above and the moon casting its soft light upon the sea around, and there talk of times gone and events in prospect. Last night when so situated we heard a hearty laugh from and among the sailors and our men, and knowing the passage of the equator could not be passed over without some joke, we were drawn to the capstan (the limit to all save officers) and soon saw the

cause of merriment. Old Neptune had paid our ship a visit on a donkey. It was got up in good style, the donkey consisting of two sailors covered up in cloths so as to represent the legs of the beast with a false head and tail that would have done credit to Niblo. The old Sea King bestrode his beast, with his trident and crown. After having made his circuit of the ship he passed over the bows and disappeared, among the elements of his kingdom—dissolution. . . .”

“*September 9.*—Well is the sea [called] a fickle thing, for we are still upon it. Tomorrow land is to be in sight, Cape Frio, 60 miles from Rio, and on the day after tomorrow we expect to tread upon a more steady surface than this deck affords, to taste something more savory than salt beef and pork. Yes, the oranges must suffer and all sorts of fruit, but my sheet is now full of speculation and I will attempt to make its envelope more real if not more interesting.”

“*September 12, 1846.*

“*Saturday.*

“About three P. M. the day before yesterday the lookout cried Land Ho! and sure enough a little on our weather bow there appeared through the hazy air, a huge mass that changed in form and shape as the mist blew by. Soon, however, it assumed a shape and form, we glided by it and as the shades of night closed upon us we found our vessel between two high islands that mark the approach to the harbor. Anchor was dropped, for the mist hung heavy and low. Soon the lights on the lighthouse opened and all night we lay within a couple

of miles of the light on Rasa Island. There we lay till one P. M. yesterday, when a gentle breeze rising, the anchor was hoisted, and noiselessly we slipped into the harbor—a heavy smoky mist enveloping all save the immediate shores of the bay. Even those still bear a fanciful appearance, so that for a fair description of the harbor I must await a fair day. Forts abound guarding the entrance and every island in the harbor. We are now at anchor abreast of the City of St. Sebastian, half a mile distant, with a smoke enveloping it so that it seems a mass of roofs in a quiet nook between very high hills, with orange and palm and cocoanuts hanging their boughs in the quiet still air. Large vessels of war lay all round us, of all nations, but conspicuous stands the frigate *Columbia* with the star-spangled banner hanging from the peak. All the officers have been on board of us to talk of home and the news, to ask for letters and see soldiers at sea. Indeed, we find our arrival has created quite a sensation and all the Americans consider themselves unlucky to be here in a land of plenty and sunshine whilst others are engaged in war. We came to anchor yesterday and immediately a boat was lowered for town. I went of course. We landed at steps leading to a fine stone pier, with iron railing, immediately back of which stood the Hotel Pharoux, towards which we directed our steps—seven in number. We entered a large room where tables were arranged as at an eating house. Groups of officers of all nations and mustachioed gentry clustered about with their cigars and wine. We did not stay long but strolled across a square resting on the bay, to

the central building called Palacio, the city residence of the Emperor, a fine large building of stone, three stories, with large vestibule and hall. We passed on, through the streets where churches stood thick and then passed into a long narrow street, paved, on either side of which were stores and shops in which were displayed every article of use and luxury that man or woman could desire: ladies' bonnets, artificial flowers made of shells, silk and feathers, all made by girls who sit in rows at their task looking their prettiest. Of course we stopped and looked, and on we strolled for nearly a mile, then turned back through all the streets to Pharoux where we sat down to a good supper, beefsteak, potatoes, coffee, omelet, bread and butter, with oranges, bananas, ice cream, segars, and iced liquors. I need hardly add after fifty-nine days' abstinence from such luxuries ample justice was done. After supper we again strolled through the city observing the mules and soldiers that abounded, the omnibus drawn by two donkeys, and carriages with the same animals bestrode by a postilion, with boots to their eyes and spurs that would convict any criminal of cruelty to animals at first sight; but every country has its fashions, and I am not disposed to criticize them, but during my stay here shall conform in all things to the customs of the place.

"Today I am officer of the day, and will be on duty till tomorrow, Sunday morning, when I propose attending the Cathedral in the morning, ride out to the botanical garden in the afternoon, and go to the theatre in the evening like a good Portuguese. . . ."

"ON BOARD THE U. S. STORE SHIP, *Lexington*,

"HARBOR OF RIO JANEIRO, Brazil,

"September 16, 1846.

"I wrote you a hasty letter upon my arrival four days since, and am now seated at the earliest leisure to resume the thread of my story, as I take it for granted that you feel an interest in my travels. I wrote you on Saturday. On Sunday morning the officer of the deck called me to see a beautiful barque under sail with the American ensign at the peak, on board of which our letters were to be sent. Down she came before a fine land breeze, and soon our small gig pulled off with the Captain's clerk armed with a mail bag full of letters for home. We saw him mount her sides, go aboard, and soon returned and the barque filled away beautifully, worthy to be a messenger in any cause. . . .

"That was Sunday morning, the smoky mist still enveloping the beautiful scenery of the harbor, but we hurried our breakfast and inspection and pushed off for the city to see its strange people and places. We landed at the public steps, crossed the public square, by the palace to the Cathedral, but it was closed, morning mass having been said at daylight. There we stopped and tried to talk bad Portuguese to some loafers, but utterly failing in a compound of bad English, Spanish, Dutch and Indian, we resumed our journey, bound on seeing some of the magnificent churches with which the city abounds. Soon we separated into parcels of two and three, each by a different route. Seeking to allay that spirit of curiosity that stamps the Yankee character, I with another, strolled up the Rua do



Ouvador, *the* street of the city, and though it was Sunday, it was as gaily thronged as on Saturday night, shops all open, carts going in the street, hucksters crying out their heathenish calls and nothing to distinguish it from any other day. . . .

“On we passed, up one street, down another, till we reached a ramp or ascent leading up to the chief monastery of the place. We ascended, and got a fine view of the city as it lay round the base of the rock,—then entering the church, by a side door, passed into a court-yard about 100 feet square, surrounded by a two-story stone building and colonnade. The stones of the floor were all coverings for vaults below and on them were recorded long Latin eulogies upon the merits of those who lay below—the dates went far back. Loitering there to decipher the names of some of the departed bishops, we were soon interrupted by a black boy carrying on his head a waiter with some eatables, but we could get nothing out of him but to point to a stairway, up which we passed into a vestibule, where were hung four large pictures, groups of saints, badly executed in glaring colors. Several doors led from this—one of which by a gallery led to the gallery prepared for the Choir of the Church of the Establishment. I felt as though I intruded, not a soul was near but my companion, and there I stood in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Conventa do Pradus, or Santo Bento. It was beautiful, for it is the chapel of the richest monastery and convent of the Brazilian Empire. How shall I describe it, for I know you would like to know. First then, it is the central building of a large establishment



that stands on the most conspicuous hill of the city, is oblong, about forty by seventy feet, floor paved with variegated marbles laid in mosaic. A graceful colonnade with gilded pillars supports a tasty gallery on three sides of the building. That part of it opposite the altar is devoted to the choir, with a fine organ, near which I stood. All parts of the building are gilded, with the exception of several spaces reserved for paintings of the Virgin Mary, during all the chief scenes of her life. Lamps were suspended from the pillars by curved bars of gold elaborately wrought. There were no benches or seats in the church, and no part was carpeted save that in the immediate vicinity of the altar. This I will not describe further than that it stood in a large niche, curtained and ornamented in rich style. All round the church and beneath the gallery and behind the colonnade were several private altars for the devotion of the priests. Thinking we intruded, we were about leaving when we met a black servant boy who gave us to understand by signs that strangers might see anything. So we loitered all about the church and building for more than an hour, looking at the groups of priests with their dark grey robes and shaven crowns, just as Gil Blas described them a century ago. A nunnery is attached to the same establishment, but admission is not given to strangers. By this time we were obliged to hurry to our boat, and came off to dress for dinner aboard the frigate *Columbia*. It was a most excellent one, of course, and we did not get back on board the *Lexington* till the night was well advanced and all disposed for sleep. Most opportunely a fine rain occurred that night

so that as the sun rose on Monday the smoky mist disappeared and the Sugar Loaf, the Corcovado and Organ mountains, before but dimly seen, rose up in all their majesty and frowned upon the bright slopes beneath, the glittering spires of the city, the red tile roofs and the harbor with its numerous fleet of merchant and war ships. Really it far surpasses New York bay in every respect—in the facility for entrance, the depth of water and bold outlines of scenery. Would that I had time to attempt a sketch to send you.<sup>1</sup> I have searched all the book-stores in the city, but find nothing mailable that can convey to you an idea of the natural beauty of the place, but Geography teaches you that it is under the tropic of Capricorn, a generous climate, that in the hands of the lazy Portuguese a city of 250,000 people has risen up and has become the seat of the only Empire in America. But I am yarning and must confine myself to my own experiences, else there is no telling where my pen may wander. On Monday, then, with a bright sun and clear sky, as soon as breakfast was despatched, a boat might have been seen pushing from the *Lexington's* side with six officers on board, all bent upon adventure. Soon they stood upon the quay and into the Hotel Pharoux to discuss plans, then to a livery stable, where all sorts of horses, mules and vehicles were inspected, and at last a coach and four with two saddle horses were selected to accommodate the six. Ord and I took the horses and led through the narrow, curved streets of the city, paved with broad, rough

<sup>1</sup> An excellent map of the harbor was drawn, in ink, on the last sheet of this letter.

granite blocks, which rattled as our smart ponies galloped along. For three miles we rode between houses of real Spanish or Portuguese style, and then we reached the suburb Gloria, so called from a fine church by that name—thence through a pass where the road came upon a beautiful lake or bay, from which the mountains rise all round, shutting it off from the rest of the world save by a very narrow strait connecting it with the main harbor. This is a famous place in these parts, known by the name of Bota Fogo Bay. Thence we passed along a valley, with beautiful houses surrounded by gardens containing oranges, pineapples, bananas, coconuts, and other tropical trees. On, on we rode to the country, the mountains rising higher and higher on either side till at last the sea came full in sight, the breakers dashing high in air. We were bound for the botanical gardens, kept up by the government to encourage the growth of tropical fruits.

“It was more beautiful than I was prepared to see, arranged with considerable taste at the same time exhibiting some of the most useful trees in nature,—such as coffee, tea, nutmeg, pepper, cocoa, cinnamon, cloves, everything in fact we could think of. Water was brought in from the mountains to irrigate the gardens first and then pass into a pretty lake. Near it too some cedar trees were trained so as to form a pretty cottage with doors and windows quite rural and natural. We spent a couple of hours, having for a guide an old negro, who could converse in signs with anybody, from the frequent visits of strangers like us who speak a barbarous language. Near the garden a Maine man

has established a sort of resting place, and had taken charge of our horses before we had fairly lighted, so that by the time we had reached the gate in returning, he had them finely stabled and a fine lunch prepared for us, which we did ample justice to. We then returned to the city and struck up the valley of the Tijuca to see the palace of the Emperor. The scenery was more beautiful than that towards the botanical garden. The palace is about three miles out from the city, and standing upon an eminence is seen at a distance. We approached to the very door without hindrance, though soldiers and officers were lingering near, rode round the fountain in front of the palace called San Christovao, stood our horses, took a good look and could see no difference between that building and any other, though it were the Emperor's. It consists of two three-story buildings connected by a curtain two stories high. In the middle is a semi-circular projection with a corridor. Each story is marked by the iron walk in front of each row of windows, but such is the fashion in all the houses and it is in there that the Senoritas show themselves in the cool of the evening. Night was fast approaching and long rows of oil lamps glittered along the streets as we rode to the stable. We found that our stylish friends who sported the chariot, in making too grand a display, had a grand breakdown and had to walk home. This was a good subject for us and we made the most of it, though our hard ponies made our bones ache not a little; indeed I feel the hard jog-trot of my nag yet. I think of taking another ride again but fear our man won't let us have his horses again as they were not spared.

“Yesterday we went regularly a-shopping, and such a compound of languages was never before heard. Many amusing scenes necessarily occurred, but it is impossible to name them, nor do I see at this instant what better use I can make of my next leaf than attempting to give you a map of the scene, so here goes:

[The map mentioned in the previous foot-note is drawn here.]

“Well, the sketch of the harbor is done and is tolerably good, except it is a little too narrow, and without drawing and color it is impossible more than to give you a general idea of the place. Ships and boats to which you are unaccustomed enter so in the view from here that they almost conceal the city. Many ships of war are quite near us, so that we hear their drums and music, but I still think the *Columbia* beats them all, for they have a regular band, which plays ‘Lucy Long’ and ‘Dan Tucker,’ ‘Yankee Doodle,’ or something of the kind every night, which sounds so strangely in this distant land. The frigate sails on Thursday and we shall again start on Friday or Saturday. This is Wednesday, and I am on board on duty as officer of the day; have been interrupted a dozen times but shall persevere, for to-morrow I must take another ride and scale the craggy sides of the Corcovado which commands a view of everything. By the way, we have all met Mr. Wise,<sup>1</sup> the Minister, who has been very kind, gave a large dinner party to-day, from which I am absent on account of its being my day’s duty. It is now going on

<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Wise, later Governor of Virginia during John Brown’s raid.



and is no doubt a good one. His house is back of Gloria hill and I will have to call upon him to-morrow.

“One of the first things in Rio that strikes the stranger is the large quantity of negroes carrying bags of coffee on their heads, trotting after each other like Indians, chanting an African chant. Carts or drays are not used—omnibuses drawn by mules run hourly to San Christovao and Gloria—steamboats of small size and curious make across the bay to Praya Grande every hour—the sedan chair is in common use by ladies, they are carried by two slaves. But of all things that amused me is the common volante—a sort of gig, with high springs behind, one mule in the shafts and one outside, ridden by a postillion with big boots and spurs. When in a hurry, the postillion’s arms and legs flying about and the lumbering concern flying along, they look like a structure of a past age compared with the buggy; however they are peculiar to the Spanish, who doubtless prefer them to Yankee inventions. A large stream of water is brought into the city from the country by a fine aqueduct, which leads it to several public fountains, around which are always assembled a crowd of negroes with their kegs to be filled for use. No wells are thought of. These fountains are variously and prettily ornamented, all erected by the Government for public use. The people generally are well dressed, but form a curious medley of all colors, blacks being able to attain all ranks in society, though slavery in its worst form is practised openly, even the importation of slaves by the thousand from Africa. . . .

“Rio Janeiro is a well governed city and it is safe to walk the streets at any time day or night. It is a great



place for diamonds, great quantities of which are sent abroad to England and elsewhere. Ornaments of the most beautiful kind are displayed, of jewelry, necklaces, head ornaments, breast pins, everything that can be made of gold, silver, diamonds and precious stones. Large quantities of artificial flowers are made of feathers that are very beautiful. I would purchase some were I bound the other way, but they could not easily be sent.

*“Thursday.*—I was officer of the day yesterday and my duties required my presence on board all day. During it I managed to write thus much, but as soon as my turn was passed I went to the city for the purpose of going to the Corcovado mountain which overtops all others and stands like a king among the many peaks that are in sight. Unluckily the day was cloudy and threatened rain so as to induce us to postpone the trip till to-morrow. Lieut. Halleck <sup>1</sup> and I then set out to examine the aqueduct that supplies the city with water. It is a hundred years old, built by the Jesuits who were the original founders of the colony. It is merely a stone pipe or duct that brings the water from the mountain to the city, to its various public fountains, whence it is carried to all the houses on the heads of negroes. These fountains are variously arranged, some like monuments, the water flowing continually from certain points, others like the side of a house, with cornice and painted spaces. We followed the aqueduct from point to point, all the while ascending for five miles, and then we met the Minister, Mr. Wise,

<sup>1</sup> Henry W. Halleck, later Lieutenant-General U. S. A.

with a young naval officer, who likewise were visiting the source of the duct, called the Mother of Waters, a beautiful mountain stream. It was raining and we sat for a while under a shelter of leaves erected by some workmen, and then Mr. Wise commenced his return home. Lieut. Halleck and I continued up the Corcovado. It was steep and long, the path was winding round and round the hill, so that it was half past two before we stood upon the summit. The scene was magnificent, though the misty air prevented our seeing as far as we expected, but Rio and the surrounding country. We had walked ten miles, and the same distance lay between us and dinner, so we hadn't much time to look, and commenced our descent. We returned through the most beautiful valley of Brazil, that of Larangeiras (of oranges) in which the cottages looked really inviting, in their whitewashed walls, peeping out from rows of orange and banana trees. Coffee trees are in great abundance, resemble somewhat the haw bush. Two seeds of coffee are enclosed in a berry like a very large red cherry. I have now a beautiful bush of them brought to-day from the Corcovado. It was near sunset before we reached the hotel, where we ordered a hearty, substantial dinner, to which ample justice was done, for we were hungry, wet and cold. We are now on board again and I must think of closing this as to-morrow we are to be ready for sea, though the chances are that we will not get off till Saturday. This departure will be as bad as the last, as it will be impossible to write you again till we reach Valparaiso, about the first week in November, which will take three or four

months to reach you. This long exemption must be my excuse for so long a letter this time. Several vessels have arrived here since we have been in, bringing news as late as the 30th of July wherein it seems that the war is to be prosecuted with vigor—it must be a long one unless peace is made this winter, for the Mexicans are a proud people. The war excites much speculation here, but all seem to think the people of the United States are determined to possess North Mexico, regardless of the principles involved. Such is pretty near the truth, but we will hear all about it when we get to California. . . .”

“ON BOARD THE U. S. STORE SHIP *Lexington*

“HARBOR OF RIO JANEIRO, Brazil,

“September 18.

“I was off this morning inspecting two of the principal forts—Cobras and Villegagnon, and I have just finished my sketch in pencil. Now that my hand is in I’ll add a few more embellishments, making a sort of pictorial envelope. This<sup>1</sup> is the shape of the ordinary house of the city, roofed with tiles of a greyish red color—walls of plastered stone, the balcony of iron. It sometimes extends the full front of the house and sometimes only in front of each window. In them are seen the women or ladies peering upon the street with their black hair combed back tight,—painfully so. In general the ladies are not beautiful, but of course there are exceptions. The windows and doors of the lower

<sup>1</sup>Referring to a pencil sketch at the side of the page. Sherman’s facility in drawing was often exercised in his letters.

stories are barred—over the windows with iron, sometimes with wood, so that questions are asked and answered before a latch is touched. No fireplaces or chimneys are used—never cold enough to sit by, and all the cooking is done in *brazéiros* or pots of charcoal. Yesterday I noticed a funeral of some poor person. The coffin was like a large trunk—not shaped as ours, and the corners covered with gilt papers. It lay across the foot board of a volante; no procession followed but four negro boys carried candles four feet long, lighted two on each side. It was raining hard, so the boys had great trouble to keep the candles lighted. The volante had to be stopped several times till the boys could relight their extinguished tapers: that looks odd enough in a shower in broad daylight. When a person of distinction dies they always associate military pomp with the ceremonies of the church. Today as I passed a church I observed a body of troops drawn up in front of a church. I walked in. A double row of persons with lighted torches lined the way to a side altar in front of the principal one. Six or eight priests in robes were singing the funeral service for some female who was distantly connected with some noble family. As the service terminated the bells tolled and were followed by the bells of fifty other churches. All are Catholics here, and of course the church stamps a strong character upon all the people. Priests are seen in the streets at all hours with their broad hats, black gowns and cord girdles. Upon all of the church festivals all the city turns out to enjoy the day. Rest and festivity, music and dancing, mark the day and all evince real happiness,

hollowing and burning gunpowder to an alarming extent. Upon Sundays and all festivals the Theatre is thronged. I attended it, and heard the opera of 'Beatrice di Tenda,' in [letter torn] better than any opera in New Orleans. The Theatre too is larger than that of the St. Charles, the largest in the United States. . . ."

It was on the 21st of September that the *Lexington* sailed from Rio for Valparaiso, and though the circumstances of the voyage are described in the *Sherman Letters* somewhat more fully than the matters with which the preceding letters have dealt, the following account of them is individual enough to be preserved:

"*The Lexington*, AT SEA, PACIFIC OCEAN,

"October 27, 1846.

"The Horn is passed, and all now look upon our arrival at Valparaiso as a matter of course, in a very short time. My first thought is of you and a letter is begun, to which I fear I shall be tempted to make so many additions that it will be more ponderous than interesting. I wrote you twice from Rio. The day after my last we succeeded in getting to sea, where at once the old routine was resumed, and storms and calms succeeded each other, exciting but little interest to those most affected. Time wore on, the sun became less genial and warm, rain turned into hail and snow, the air assumed a keen and more searching feel and began to sigh and moan about the rigging telling us plainly that winter was coming. The hint was taken, the lighter spars and sails were stored away, every

moveable article secured with lashing and the ship put in Cape Horn trim. We had several pretty severe storms on the way down the Patagonian coast, a pampero or two off the La Plata, but they merely served to prepare us for the gales we were doomed to encounter at the Cape. On the twenty-first day out, land was discovered ahead and soon made out to be Staten Land. We sailed round it at night and when the sun rose bright and clear the next morning, the snow clad mountains looked so hard and forbidding that even a landsman would prefer the decks of a ship to such a specimen of his element. Look to the map and you'll see that as soon as we rounded Cape St. John, or the easternmost end of Staten Land, we looked upon the broad Pacific. I could not see that it differed from the element upon which we had dwelt so long, but a majestic roll or swell, characteristic of the place, bade us be prepared for storms.

"There is a current from the Pacific to the Atlantic and the prevalent winds are from the south-west, so a ship has to stem both of these, besides encountering the head swell that almost defies the skill of the navigator. Sailors hate land and only approach it for fresh grub or to take a fresh departure. It was for the latter purpose that we took a peek at the land and then steered to the south to keep clear of the Horn. The day was fair but ere night fell a heavy mass of clouds rose to the south-west, which boiled up and up till it gave way to a howling wind that came on charged with snow squalls that swallowed up everything. Then began the scuffle, and for twelve whole days and nights



these clouds of snow with gales followed each other in quick succession, dead ahead, driving us further and further off till really it was feared we would have to run for it and take shelter behind the coast of Terra del Fuego. But everything has an end and so had the south-wester, which gradually slacking away gave place to a fair wind of which advantage was taken and the day before yesterday Cape Horn was in sight. It is an island of hard snow-clad rock that rises out of deep water and is rough, unfashioned, a sample of that chaos out of which earth was made or as sailors say, God got tired when he got this low down and flung the rocks down without regard to symmetry or order, as the potter flings the loose mud from his fingers after he has completed his pot. There are several other rocky islands that are grouped about it, whilst the cold snowy mountains of Terra del Fuego form a pretty background for the picture. We passed quite near for the wind was fair and light and we all felt a curiosity to stare this monster in the face. The *Sea Gull*<sup>1</sup> was lost here when the exploring expedition was in these parts, and many a stout ship that had circled the world has gone down whole in this sea. Not a sailor but what has his yarn of shipwreck and many a history bears the words, 'Swamped off Cape Horn,' for no soul ever escapes to tell the tale.

"During the twelve days we had one night that beat anything I had ever seen, and our Captain, who has been here repeatedly, says he never had such a rough

<sup>1</sup> The *Sea Gull* was one of the vessels of the U. S. Exploring Expedition which sailed under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, in 1838. She was lost, according to his record, about May 1, 1839.

time of it. The sea ran very high and made many breaches over us. Snow sometimes lay on the decks and clogged the rigging, and icicles dangled from every point that would yield a place. The lowest the thermometer has been was  $22^{\circ}$ , or  $10^{\circ}$  below freezing. This, too, coming so soon after we had languished under a tropical sun chillblained our hands and feet, for we have no fire on board and had to do the best with coats and blankets. I missed my cloak much, and now I cannot imagine why I did not bring it along. I have caught a severe cold and my fingers are now swollen with cold. Amidst the heaviest of the storm I had to go on deck, that is I was impelled by curiosity to see the gale, to watch the big wave coming on as though it would engulf all, and the old *Lexington* rise slowly to its very summit and majestically sink into the next valley, ready to rise upon the next height; or to listen to the wind whistle, and watch the management of the gear by which this mass of a hulk is made to defy the very elements. I believe I have made some proficiency, both in the technical phrases and in the philosophy of the machine, so that should this Fortune (that has sported not a little with me) place me where nautical knowledge would be called for, I might seize the speaking trumpet, 'clewlines, buntlines, let go the haulyards, lay aloft and furl, etc.,' and work the ship to her port. Upon the whole, however, I think that Cape Horn has fully convinced me that at least the Army is better than the Navy, and land a better element to operate on than water; yea, more than once, a species of conviction has come across my mind that I

did not act the wisest part in throwing up my tame prospect at Pittsburg for this wild goose chase; but Cape Horn is passed and now for the first time since leaving New York the vessel heads towards our real destination, California. Every day and week will bring us nearer that destination which is to be some sort a home for most of us, till we are disposed of or called back to the States. . . .”

“*November 6, Lat. 58° S., Long. 76° W.*

“*of Greenwich, or 1° E. of Washington.*

“I flattered myself in thinking that Cape Horn was done with us. The sun played the hypocrite, putting on a smiling face to beguile us into a feeling of security, for the very night after I had finished the first sheet, when we were looking for a fair wind, a foul one arose dead ahead and here we are, after ten more days of gale that at times was terrific, still south of Cape Horn, the crew worn out and all dispirited at the bad prospect. The wind still continues from the north-west and God only knows when it will cease. For the last twenty-four days we have been literally tempest tost, making no progress towards our destination, whilst the sailors always superstitious consider us as Jonahs punished by Heaven for being the instruments in an iniquitous cause.

“We have had bad luck, sure enough, and according to the usual course of nature are entitled to some compensation for the future to which I trust, still hoping to reach Valparaiso. How do we pass our time, you probably would ask. One of the officers (Navy) and

half the crew has to be on the upper deck at all times, exposed to the elements. As the crew is short, we have made one fourth of our soldiers remain on deck all the time to assist in hauling at the ropes, and doing any deck work. These must be superintended by one of us (officers) for we will not allow the Navy officers to command our men except through us. This duty keeps us on duty one day out of four, on which we spend a great portion on deck, coming below, however, whenever we choose. The other three days are spent in the ward room, reading, playing cards, or sleeping. This latter being a labor rather than pleasure, and he is considered the happiest man who can punish his bed most. I have read all of Washington Irving's works that are aboard, *Pickwick*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Shakespeare*, everything I could get, and yesterday cast about to determine which I should attempt next—the Bible, *History of the Reformation* or the *Wandering Jew*, but have postponed such a task till even a time more urgent than the present. Hours too, day and night, have I lay in my berth listening to the creaking of the timbers and wondering how man with his limited strength could make a vessel so strong as to stand this violent rolling and tossing; how long this particular one can stand it, whether it would be better in case of wreck to run on deck and try the chance of a floating spar, or like the monkey clap my hands to my head and go down without a struggle. These are mere thoughts, for were you to see a group of us on deck, with the sea foaming and roaring all round as though inevitably bound to swallow us up, you could detect no sign of

apprehension, or fear. Should a poor fellow then pretend to offer up a prayer to his Maker he would be laughed at and ridiculed in such a manner as to turn devotion into resentment.

“How different is real danger to those who encounter it and those who from a comfortable fireside or terra firma merely contemplate it!

“Great quantities of birds are constantly about the ship picking up every piece of bread or meat that is thrown over. Large albatross like huge geese, and a small pigeon exactly like the tame ones, with white and black spots, are so thick and tame that we have got tired of catching them. We have caught great numbers of them and also of the albatross by a fishing line and hook baited with pork, and really it is a curious proceeding to haul in a great big goose-like bird with wings expanded and resisting with all its might till at last it stands upon the deck of a ship surrounded by a singular race of wingless birds, who are so cunning as to catch them. It is to the great number we have caught that the sailor attributes our unusually hard luck off this Cape Horn. One of our chief objects of merriment is at meal time, to see some ten hungry mortals strung around the ward room, with backs braced against the bulk head, a cup of tea in one hand, a hard biscuit and piece of beef in the other, and an appetite not diminished by being at sea. Presently the old ship rises higher and higher upon a huge sea, and pitches headlong into the next valley. Away goes the negro boy with his plate of hard tack, on him the other with the tea pot and mixed up in all sorts of order,

chairs, camp stools, and officers' legs, etc. This sea is no respecter of persons or things, for not one of us but in his turn has served as a laughing object for the rest, and every thing breakable in shape of plates, cups, etc., are among the missing; and should any strangers pay us a call they would find us poor enough, and might be forced to eat a dinner out of tin plates and wait for their turn for a drink of water out of the cup. I can now understand why all sailors are so good-natured—not that nature made them so originally, but because the sea kills or banishes all who have any malice in their composition. Who but a philosopher, and a kind one too, could behold without swearing, a nice plate of rice, boiled and brought with great care from the galley, suddenly cast into the dirty scuppers full of dirt and salt water, with a broken plate and nigger boy close by if not actually in it! Yet if one were to be angry at such a sight he would be voted unworthy of the sea, a reproach indeed. . . .

*"Friday, November 20.*—We are now within two hundred miles of Valparaiso. The sky is serene, the sea very smooth and pacific, and a light breeze gives us assurance that tomorrow or next day we shall once more drop our anchor. Our stay will be so short that I will have but little time for letter-writing and therefore will enclose what I have already written upon my arrival. How glad we all were to get away from the cold damp weather off the Cape? The sun, or Old Jamaica, as it is termed, is regarded as a kind friend and our chief occupation is picking out the sunny parts of the deck to enjoy the genial rays. Birds have



gradually left us and this morning a school of whales came quite near to bid us adieu.

“What fools they are for preferring such cold stormy regions to the sunny equator. A month hence no doubt we will be seeking shade and a cool draught of air as much as we now do the sunny side. It has occurred to me several times that I ought to have sent Phil an inventory of the things I left at Pittsburg. I did not conceive them of sufficient value, but now remember my map (Tanner’s), some silver spoons (four of each kind), and a box of mathematical instruments that I may want again. Should we remain at Valparaiso long enough to see anything of interest I will write again. We have now been out sixty days, twenty-six of them off Cape Horn, a long passage and unless we have better luck the rest of the way it will be pretty close to March before we land in California. . . .

“*Tuesday, November 24.*—This morning we ran round the rocky headland that forms the harbor of Valparaiso, and are now lying near one American sloop of war, *Levant*, one English line of battle, two frigates, two sloops, and other foreign shipping. We find that we did very well for sixty-four days. The *Saratoga*, not having arrived that left Rio eighty-four days ago, apprehensions are felt for her safety. One of the English frigates was driven back three times and was detained near three months off Cape Horn. So we had no just reason to complain of the *Lexington*.

“Here we find news from the California coast, all the towns in possession of our fleet, so that we’ll have

but little to do else than land and fortify either San Francisco or Monterey—no fighting—that's too bad after coming so far. . . .”

“UNITED STATES SHIP *Lexington*,

“HARBOR OF VALPARAISO, Chili,

“November 26, 1846.

“We have been here for three days. I had prepared my letters and given them to a merchant, Mr. Hobson, to be sent by the British steamer that sails for Panama the day after tomorrow. We have just learned that there is some difficulty in getting the English agents to insure their despatch to the United States. I will go on shore tomorrow and if I find such to be the case will despatch this by the steamer and send the more lengthy and ponderous letters by the ship *Seaman* that sails for Baltimore around Cape Horn. We are all well, merely engaged in getting water and provisions, which will detain us about a week longer when we shall push out for Monterey. You will have seen in the papers Commodores Sloat's and Stockton's proclamations, with an account of the taking of California and the anarchy that prevails there and can fancy the task we will have in reconciling a proud people to a new yoke. We do not yet know whether we will establish ourselves at Monterey or San Francisco.

“We find that vast importance is attached here to our expedition. The idea is that we are terrible and we encourage the idea, for our stores are superior in kind and quantity to any thing ever seen in Spanish countries. There is a very large fleet of English

vessels here. Many of the officers have paid visits of etiquette.

"Yesterday the Admiral, Sir George Seymour, sent intimation that he would visit us today and accordingly did so in uniform with his suite. This is unusual, for a store-ship is not strictly warlike and prepared for display, yet the old *Lexington* was brushed up and looked quite well. But it was not the ship they wished to see, but our men.

"The conversation turned chiefly upon California from which the Admiral has lately arrived in the *Collingwood*, line of battle ship. He gave preference to Stockton's proclamation which by our Naval officers is not deemed comparable to Sloat's. The English evidently dislike our following their example in making conquests, but I do not believe, however, they intend any opposition to our steps. They say the French have despatched a large fleet for the Pacific, so that it is within the range of possibility that stirring scenes are yet in the future for us. I purposely refrain from describing the city and harbor as it will afford me ample means for a long letter to be written on the next stage of our voyage. We were sixty-three days from Rio here and had a very severe time off Cape Horn which I have partially described in my long letter by the *Seaman*. Should I send this letter by steamer it will be the only one. If you can convey to Mother a hint of my progress and safety and tell her my letters are sent round the Cape, it will relieve her uneasiness at my long silence. Of course you have written me before this and I shall expect to find several [letters] awaiting my arrival at

the fleet on the coast. The *Seaman* will be at Baltimore in about 110 days, when you will receive a long letter."

"UNITED STATES SHIP *Lexington*,

"VALPARAISO, December 5, 1846.

". . . Since my last two ships of war have come in—the frigate *Independence* from Boston, whence she sailed August 29, nearly six weeks after us. She is a faster sailer than the *Lexington* and did not have bad weather at the Cape as we did. She brought letters for all the officers but me. I got a paper from Cincinnati. I consoled myself that my most valued correspondents were in the West where they have no timely notice of the sailing of vessels. The *Independence* is destined for the north-west coast. The line of battle ship *Columbus* is also here from China by way of the Sandwich Islands. They were on their way home but found here despatches, which may compel them to sail for the north-west coast. Commodore Biddle, who commands, will first go to Callao before deciding. I hope the *Columbus* will go on the station, for she is a beautiful ship carrying 86 guns and would have much weight in case England or France should interfere with us. . . .

"I might give you a pictorial letter of Valparaiso, but can get no good paper for the purpose and in my next will attempt to describe the city and its peculiarities. I do not attempt it now because I have not time. We shall sail to-day and will in all probability cross the equator in twenty days, thence to Monterey it will take us from forty to sixty days. Probably we may go to the

Sandwich Islands, at least I hope so, as I want to see them before I return to the United States.

"The weather has been delightful, but I have been too much busied by private and public business to make a trip to the Capital, Santiago; have confined my journeys to the different valleys within ten miles of the city, all of which are sufficiently barren, the very opposite of those green rich gorges about Rio Janeiro. This city will not at all compare with that, except in having better horses, ponchos and larger spurs, nor are there any slaves here, all work being done by free lazy Spanish Chileno fellows who seem to say as they bend under severe loads that they work, to be sure, but wish it to be distinctly understood that it does not detract from their being *Cavalleros*. . . ."

The following letter, which has in place of the date a sketch-map of Valparaiso, was apparently begun after the voyage to California was resumed:

"There now have I finished a sketch of Valparaiso, which may be as incomprehensible as so much Chinese marks; but conceive yourself on a high range of hills, bare, barren and desolate, looking out upon the boundless Pacific. At your feet, is an indentation in the coast which is the Harbor of Valparaiso somewhat in the form I have given: the high point of hill to the left on which stand the light-house and a battery of guns; next it at the very margin of water, the old part of the city arranged, the two well built streets, with a kind of public square at the further end, where the band plays of a moonlight night to the delight of hundreds of

Senoritas and their poncho<sup>d</sup> Caballeros. Near it is the custom house, the centre of the city; in front of it, the public wharf, where are congregated boats of all countries and nations, from which arise a perfect bedlam of sounds, Dutch, French, Spanish, but above all, loudest of the loud, is heard the earnest Irishman or persevering Yankee. It is in the plaza, between the custom house and wharf, where a stranger is first impressed with the character of this new people.

"No negroes are here, but a swarthy set of active fellows carrying bales and bags from the wharf to the custom house, edging their way among sailors and peons (or country people) either lounging in groups or bestriding their shaggy horses. The Almendral is the new part of the city and is dignified by the principal churches and theatre which occupy nearly the whole of the new plaza. You know that Plaza merely means a public square, usually paved like a street. In Valparaiso they were not ornamented by trees or fountains, but were dusty, hot and dirty. Indeed the absence of vegetation is a marked deformity in this picture, nature having given but the scantiest furze, and these people having only raised a few peach, almond and poplar trees. These, scanty as they are, are only to be found at the base of the hills back of the Almendral, in gardens, owned chiefly by certain convents and monasteries of great antiquity and wealth.

"To the right of my map the hills rise again, completing the small amphitheatre upon which stands the City. From it the roads lead in zigzag tracks to the summit of the coast range of hills and penetrate far



back among the Andes, affording all Chili a means of exchanging their wheat, etc., for the cloths of Europe and nicnacs of Yankees. . . .

"I did not go to Santiago or Quillota but confined my wanderings to the city and its immediate neighborhood, taking frequent opportunities to gallop their sturdy horses over the steep and crooked roads that looked exactly like their donkeys, tough and stubborn.

"I attended the opera and church, both on Sunday, in the same public square, attended a hurdle-race just back of the light-house, where hundreds of ladies were, and where six tolerable horses were required in running about a mile to leap four hurdles of wicker work about four feet high. The riders were chiefly English (one a midshipman) dressed in fancy coats and caps. They made a fine start and at the first leap one horse fell with his rider and another threw his rider. The balance ran the race making the leaps, the English midshipman winning on a horse owned by the Admiral of the fleet, Sir George Seymour. This would be deemed discreditable, were our navy officers to patronize such sports and even ride a horse race. 'Tis different with the English who by all means encourage athletic sports and, go where they will, must introduce the hurdle race or some similar sport. On this race-course were all sorts of people, nearly all mounted—many native ladies. These are pretty looking on horse-back because they ride well and have their hair dressed prettily, wearing no bonnets. Fashion, however, is making rapid inroads upon the native grace and dress, substituting bonnets for the reboso, and other

changes that 'enrich the milliner but make the wearers poor indeed.' Indeed the progress of civilization and fashion is depriving the traveller of all reward for his toil, showing him the same identical dress and manner that he left behind him. Thank God that the French have no effect upon the common herd, who may dress as much or as little as they please and to them one must look for the characteristics of a people. At the hurdle-race one might have imagined himself near New York, for all the ladies with some exceptions wore a hat and feather with the long skirt. To study the native groups, then, one must go on the road to Santiago where at every road groups are met that are purely Chileno. There you see a herd of mules and donkeys loaded with bales of hay, vegetables, wood or fagots, chickens in coops, everything imaginable, trudging along up hill and down hill, without bridle, but patiently bearing their burden to market. Ahead is the madre mule with a bell, whose sound is known and followed by the ugly, shabby, patient group. Behind them is the Peon, or muleteer, a peaked straw hat, a poncho over his shoulders and lasso in hand. His saddle consists of any number of shaggy cloths or pillions secured to a saddle tree by thongs of leather and from it are suspended two huge wooden stirrups holding the feet of the rider, weighted down by spurs truly huge and cruel to behold, the whole making a real spanish 'Pieter.' Indeed somehow or other I have associated the donkey with the Spaniard, whether from groups in pictures we had to draw at West Point or from the sketches of Gil Blas I know not. The poncho is a piece of cloth woven

coarse of goat's hair, nearly square, of the size of a small blanket, three stripes of fancy colors, one near each edge and one down the middle. In this last there is a hole, through which the head is passed allowing the poncho to rest lightly and gracefully on the shoulders, giving to the wearer the truly Spanish, magnificent air. This garment is worn at all times, by the merchant in his store and the beggar in the street. The poor devil that can't get anything else picks up a piece of old carpet, cuts a hole and soon struts under his poncho. The brighter the colors the more it is prized. Deeming them well suited for our expected life we supplied ourselves with them, as also leggins, saddle pillions, etc., that seemed remarkably well suited for a frontier life.

"Wilkes<sup>1</sup> on his exploring expedition visited Valparaiso and gave a full account of all he saw, so if you feel anxious to study the place I would advise you to refer to him. I deemed the whole place so very inferior in natural beauty to the Harbor of Rio Janeiro that I was disappointed and for many days could not reconcile myself to it. The city itself looked so cramped, the high, rugged, barren hills seeming ready to crowd the city into the very ocean, and, worse than all, the deep gashes (bare and unseemly) in the mountain contrasting so badly with the delightful beautiful valleys on either side of the Corcovado near Rio. Whilst there<sup>2</sup> five of our men deserted and it fell to my task to search for

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, commander of expedition previously mentioned, author of *Narrative of United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838-1842*; later the central figure of the "Trent Affair."

<sup>2</sup> Evidently Valparaiso, not Rio.

them. For two days I searched assisted by many vigilantes, but to no purpose; they were not found, having escaped towards Santiago. This search, however, brought me to, and through, sailors' boarding-houses and all sorts of low places that are seldom seen. Never before did I see the exhibition of so much vice and iniquity, nor do I believe there are places to compare with the suburbs of Valparaiso in any city of the United States. If missionaries were to give them a call instead of sowing dissension amongst so-called heathens, they would have stronger claims upon the charity of the world. In Chili the Catholic is the state religion, but all others are tolerated. All the Americans speak well of the people, as honest and well disposed, and the amount of vice I speak of is confined to the portion of the city where foreigners, sailors, etc., are congregated. To them this state of things is owing. Sailors ought to be a good set of people from the dangers they constantly are threatened with, but on shore they are the worst class of people. I wrote to you several times from Valparaiso and presume with this sheet will have said enough of the place and therefore bid it farewell.

"We hoisted anchor near sunset of the 5th of December with a fine south-east breeze, which soon carried us out upon the broad ocean. For twenty odd days we sailed with a fair wind and truly Pacific sea, delightful indeed, when at the last day of last year, we crossed the equator in Longitude 117 W. The next day, New Year's, we celebrated in rather a boisterous manner.

"Soon again we found the north-east trades and are now in Latitude 34°, 51' and Longitude 130°, 40' with

a strong north-east wind and heavy sea. It is quite cold, too, reminding us of old Cape Horn. We are all praying for a north-west wind which in four days could run us into Monterey Bay, but our usual luck may keep us bobbing on the ocean's surface for weeks in sight as it were of our destination. Should you ever meet Mr. Corwin or any other person in Congress, advocate eloquently the establishment of a mail route to California by steamers, for I am perfectly satisfied with sail vessels and would decidedly prefer returning by way of Mexico and steamers. Just think, we have been 191 days, more than six months on board this vessel, and yet are not there. Our Captain Tompkins <sup>1</sup> is confident we will find peace upon our arrival, in which case I would not be astonished if he would immediately return to his wife and family, a citizen. So too with Loeser <sup>2</sup> who is wealthy. Ord, Minor <sup>3</sup> and I will then have to conduct the affairs of the colony, shoot grizzly bears, spear the salmon, hunt the elk and exist till our time comes to return. God only knows when that is to be. I hope the war ain't over, and I will be so selfish as to wish enough promotions to make me a captain.

*"Tuesday, January 26.*—Yesterday morning we made land and ran along it for a couple of hours not knowing whether we were north or south of Monterey, but at noon an observation of the sun made us forty miles north. We then began to beat south against a head

<sup>1</sup> Captain Christopher Q. Tompkins, U. S. A.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Lucien Loeser, U. S. A.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Charles Minor, U. S. A.

wind, which gradually increased into a gale and last night we lay to in a gale which would have done credit to Cape Horn. With day the wind abated and now this evening we are not far from Monterey Bay which we expect to enter tomorrow morning. The night is beautiful, just cold enough to be pleasant, with the moon shining with a soft misty light like it used to do at Charleston. We can barely discern the high hills of land through the mist. These hills look bare and rocky, very much like those at Valparaiso. Some few pines are the only trees that are seen, but as there is a probability that every foot of these hills will be crossed I will withhold description till then. I do hope and pray that we shall not disembark at Monterey but find orders there to go up to San Francisco where we will not be compelled to live in old flea-bitten Spanish barracks. Should any mails have arrived *via* Panama I shall expect at least half a dozen letters from you.

“By the way, now when I think of it, I must tell you that the map of California in Tanner’s atlas in my collection of books is very wrong. The coast as laid down on the general maps of North America is more nearly true; but I remember to have seen on your parlor table Lieut. Frémont’s report of his second expedition with a map. That is correct and by referring to it, you will see how very wrong Tanner’s map is. At some future time I will send a sketch so that you may understand any movements we may make.”



### III

## A SOLDIER IN CALIFORNIA

1846—1850

IN June of 1846, a month before Sherman sailed from New York on the *Lexington*, the American settlers in California had proclaimed a republic. In July, only a few days before he sailed, Commodore Sloat, commanding an American fleet, had occupied the town of Monterey. The first knowledge of these facts had met the *Lexington*, as we have seen, at Valparaiso. When the *Lexington* herself reached Monterey, she ended a voyage of one hundred and ninety-eight days. During all this time the Mexican War had been running its course, and Sherman knew well that he was missing opportunities for military distinction that were all too rare for the young soldier. In his *Memoirs* he wrote of his sensations on hearing at a later day of the exploits of his brother officers in the army: "I felt deeply the fact that our country had passed through a foreign war, that my comrades had fought great battles, and yet I had not heard a hostile shot. Of course, I thought it the last and only chance in my day, and that my career as a soldier was at an end."<sup>1</sup> Indeed the life into which he was plunged upon reaching California

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 110.

must have seemed barren of openings for professional advancement. Yet the records already published show it to have been highly varied and highly interesting. To have borne a part in the beginnings of a commonwealth like California, to have seen at close range the effects of so far-reaching an event as the discovery of gold, to have stood so near to the elemental in modern civilization were experiences that atoned for much. And the letters to Miss Ewing give further evidence that Sherman was putting his eyes and his intelligence to good use.

“1847.

“We reached our anchorage late this afternoon, Wednesday, January 27, 1847, and found here the ship *Independence*, which left Valparaiso after us but out-sailed us and reached this harbor some days since. The sloop of war *Dale* is here too, but leaves tomorrow for Panama with a mail, in which this comes. Besides these two, there is but one other vessel, a small brig captured by the squadron. Not a mail has reached this place from the United States since we left, and of course none of us found the letters which we expected, but a vessel is daily expected from Panama which may bring us letters, unless our government still continues to make no arrangements for letters to cross the Straits of Panama. Indeed for the first time we feel the want of protection by our government, of which our citizens residing in foreign countries so frequently complain. We have picked up a vast deal of news, but I can give you but an outline; the details would fill volumes.

"The town, Monterey, lies in a beautiful nook, with high hills covered with pines back and on each side of it. It is composed of straggling mud or adobe houses without order. Since its capture a strange state of things has existed, nearly all the males having taken to the woods, the females remaining and communicating by stealth with their husbands, fathers and brothers. Some are gradually returning. A military guard is stationed in the town, of sailors, marines, and volunteers made up of the strangest medley of men on earth. These men are to be discharged and we are to take up our abode on a point of land overlooking the bay and town. This is the present supposition, although we are going to make an effort to go to San Francisco.

"This harbor is perfectly open, no harbor at all, but the shores are very green and pretty and the naval officers who have been on shore describe that back of the hills as still more beautiful. Game abounds, but all sorts of provisions except beef are scarce and exceeding dear: flour at twenty-eight dollars a barrel and hard to get at that, potatoes several dollars a bushel. In fact there have been so many depredators here that the poor inhabitants stand a fair chance of starvation. These volunteers employed by Frémont have been so fierce and unrestrained that they have committed many excesses, and many murders have been committed in retaliation. Several naval officers have been drowned, murdered and captured, but all the names are not familiar to me, so I can not tell names. Commodore Stockton is down the coast at St. Diego or Puebla de

los Angeles where he has had some skirmishes. Frémont is hurrying there to assist with California Rangers, and, last and best, General Kearny<sup>1</sup> has fought his way from Missouri to the south of California, has lost some men and officers, but here again the news are so hasty that I cannot give them this time. St. Diego is nearer Panama than this and it is more than probable that all these details will reach you as soon or sooner than this.

"Thank God, after 198 days at sea we have got here, find war raging, but at a distance from us and a quiet little inoffensive town ready to receive us as oppressors and guards. Some events will transpire when General Kearny approaches us, by which time I will be more familiar and better situated to tell you tales of war and adventure. I am in good health and spirits, ready for a fight or horse race, just as fate may place at my service. Should we land here I'll have hard work in getting my stores<sup>2</sup> under shelter and making the purchases that fall to my share, but of all these details when next an opportunity offers. Should my past letters seem blank and unsatisfactory you must remember that the sea is not a brightener of fancy or pen. The *Dale* will sail by the first fair puff, and I must write a line to Mother and some other of my friends.

"The map I have made as a harbor of Valparaiso will answer well for Monterey, if you increase it so as to make this bay twenty miles wide instead of two. They are strongly similar in all save here we have fine forests of pine and oak. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Watts Kearny, uncle of Gen. Philip Kearny.

<sup>2</sup> Sherman was quartermaster and commissary.

“MONTEREY, California,  
“March 12, 1847.

“Near two months have elapsed since our arrival here and not a single opportunity has presented itself for writing home, and I hear that the frigate *Savannah* will sail in a few days for home by way of Cape Horn. 'Tis a long road to send by, yet 'tis a certain one and may bear you a true if not a new letter. I wrote last by the sloop of war *Dale*, that sailed for Panama the day after our arrival here, and sent by her to Chagres a deposit of money, so that our consul there will forward any of my letters that reach him. Having secured that advantage I was ready for California, nor had I to wait long, for we began to disembark our men and took post on a hill, partly fortified on one side of the town. I, as Quarter Master, occupied with a guard the Custom House, a large building near the wharf and the most conspicuous house in Monterey. In one wing is the hospital, in the centre the stores, and the other wing my office and quarters. All the other officers are under tents on the hill and envy me my papered, comfortable room, where I can write in comfort and sleep without fear of the cold rains that fall here in the rainy or winter season. Being thus situated we began to drill our men and hold ourselves in readiness for service, for we had heard of Gen. Kearny's fight at San Pasqual. First rumors came and then letters that an armistice was concluded, that all was peace and that California belonged to the United States. That was hardly to our taste but could not be helped, and we began to be anxious to get to San Francisco about eighty

miles north of this, a place we regarded as our ultimate destination. One day a vessel hove in sight and soon came to anchor. I was dining with the ward room officers of the *Independence* at the time and heard that the stranger was the *Cyane*, and that General Kearny was on board. Commodore Shubrick sent his boat and Gen. Kea[rny] came on board and received a hearty welcome to the Bay of Monterey. I had met him before. He looked haggard, worn and rough, for he had endured a hard march from Santa Fé, had got into a tight place, lost two of his captains, one lieutenant and twenty men out of forty-five. He too had received two lance wounds in the fight, but nevertheless his face wore that smile so characteristic of him. He has always been a favorite model of mine and I was peculiarly glad to see him. He remained at Monterey and then sailed for San Francisco in the *Cyane* and returned to Monterey about ten days after in the *Savannah*, since which time he is here, which is the head quarters. Upon his return from San Francisco, he stated that we would have to go there as soon as Col. Stevenson's <sup>1</sup> regiment arrived on the coast, but has changed his mind and resolved to keep our company here till peace is declared and Stevenson's regiment discharged when we will shift our station to an old Spanish fort at the mouth of the Bay of San Francisco, which is considered one of the best harbors in the world, but until peace is declared will remain here at Monterey. Thus much of our history and I might give you an account of the

<sup>1</sup> Col. John D. Stevenson, with regiment of New York Volunteers.



doings of men out here, but the newspapers will do that for me.

"Monterey is composed of houses built of adobe or sun-dried brick, of one or two stories, with a narrow balcony [across] the whole front. About a dozen houses are comfortable and the balance mere hovels. There are some families that style themselves Dons, do nothing but walk the streets with peaked broad-brimmed hats and cloaks or serapas which are brightly colored, checkered ponchos, a colored shirt, silk or fancy pants slashed down the outside, with fringe and buttons, shoes on their feet and cigar in their mouth. Such characters were scarce when we first arrived, but Monterey is again repopulated, for all have come back from the war to the southward. The poorer classes are exactly like Indians and most of them are descended from those Indians that were taught Christianity and civilization by the old missionaries. The women are like all other Spanish women, the prouder the more Castilian blood they can boast of. Some are pretty, all dance and waltz well. but scorn the vulgar accomplishments of reading and writing. They are fond of dancing and every night of the carnival before Lent, there was a fandango at some of the houses, at which a custom prevailed of which you must have read: ladies and gentlemen (Senoritas and Caballeros) carry egg shells filled with essences, a gold leaf and spangles mixed with colored papers, which they break over the heads of favorites. I went to several of these fandangos, beginning before sundown and ending after daylight. By midnight every head was bespangled and besmeared

with cologne. Sunday was the favorite night for fandangos, but since Lent there has been but one and that on the occasion of the wedding of a Don Pablo. About the beginning of Lent, I was invited to attend a 'Representation' that much interested me, viz. 'the Temptation and Fall of Man,' performed by the most respectable people in the house of a Senor Gonsalez. We found about four in the afternoon, the hour appointed, the room quite full of ladies, natives and officers of the Army and Navy. A curtain cut off a part of the long room and one of the family stood in the corner, ready to raise the curtain when the signal was given. The curtain rose showing a room scene roughly executed, and soon entered a man dressed very dark, with wings and all sorts of diabolical traps, and he was followed by a counterpart, a woman. They held a talk on the stage, which was interpreted to me as the plot between Satan and his wife (the Serpent) to mislead newly created man. Next scene represented the Garden of Eden, executed with great taste, displaying trees of all kinds and conspicuous that of the forbidden fruit. In came Adam, (a young Spaniard in simple dress) and God, represented as a bishop. A long dialogue ensued in Spanish, when Adam soliloquized about matters and things in general and lay down to sleep. In came the priest again and after some talk stooped down to take a rib and raised up (most skillfully) Eve blushing and very pretty, like an illusion that struck all. It was little Dolores Gomez who played the part to perfection. Adam wakes delighted with his companion, but she gets a glimpse of the beautiful trees and must have some

of the fruit. At that moment the Devil and his wife the Serpent come in and persuade her that she will become as God by eating it and she does so and persuades Adam to do likewise. The next scene, God calls them and banishes them from Eden and makes the little angel Gabriel with a flaring sword (such as children use as toys) turn them out in chains and disgrace. Time wears on and the last scene is a room in heaven, God on a highly decorated throne, with the Devil and wife on one side and an angel of mercy (Panchita Gomez) on the other beseeching pity upon poor fallen man, but the Devil asks justice and a rigid execution of the decree. A long controversy ensues, Adam and Eve are summoned, their chains taken off and God modifies his first sentence to his present rule, the angel of Mercy rejoices, the little angel Gabriel chuckles at his fine gauze wings and lace dress, the Devil and wife *exceunt* in a rage and the curtain falls.

"The whole struck me forcibly, especially the good taste that marked the stage, the dresses and the performance; but much of the morality was lost by want of understanding the language, but as I had heard the story before, I could keep pace with the act. Some thought it stale, some were pleased and others not, some blasphemous and others decidedly having a moral tendency, . . . [Paper torn]

"The child of Don Castro, (still in arms against us) a little girl about nine years old and very beautiful, died about three weeks ago. All the girls of the town repaired to the house, and two days were spent in decorating the person of the little girl. A miniature

couch with delicate lace curtains, neatly drawn from the decorated canopy, made her bier on which she was borne slowly through the town to the church. A promiscuous company followed, not silently two by two but gaily, without order and with a band of music. I was on the piazza of the Government house, near which it passed and saw the little child lying as though sleeping upon its little bed. Its bearers were women who set their burden down frequently to talk or rest and during this time the band, consisting of violins, harp and some jingling instruments kept playing Spanish tunes. Guns were fired from the houses which they passed, and upon inquiry, finding that such was the custom of the country, we got out several pistols and fired a perfect salvo, of rejoicing that the child had gone to heaven. Such is custom. . . . Elsewhere there would be a year's lamentation and dressing in ugly black colors for a whole fashionable season, in a more polished community. I like this custom best, and want no one to weep my exit or to let it detain them one minute from any occupation or pleasure.

"There is a church here and the chime of bells calls to Mass every morning, and on Sundays a Spanish sermon is preached. The padre is a Mexican and a clever man. Many of our men attend every Sunday, and occasionally Ord and his brother<sup>1</sup> go, producing a most excellent effect as the Californians regard the Americans as all infidels. I went last Sunday but got too late for Mass. Heretofore, under the old Spanish

<sup>1</sup> Dr. James L. Ord had sailed on the *Lexington* as acting-assistant surgeon.

rule every American or foreigner who wanted to marry in the country and settle had to become a Catholic. This, instead of doing good, has worked evil, for these men conform to the rule, as to a tax, and now laugh if you ask them if they are not real Catholics. This country has undergone so many revolutions, every successful party coming down upon the rich missions have destroyed them all and dismantled almost every church in the land. For that reason I think the church will be essentially benefitted by the annexation of California and the strict enforcement of the laws of justice. Some sailors belonging to one of the ships broke into the church, when the town was under martial law, and stole some silver chalices, crosses and other valuables which after a time were partially recovered, the offenders most severely punished, and ample restitution made to the padre. Also in every instance since we have been here, whatever damage to property which was done by soldier or sailor has been fully repaired and offender punished. These people see this and begin to feel that they are protected instead of oppressed. When we first landed it was considered unsafe to go far into the country unarmed, but now parties of one and two go hunting daily thirty to forty miles. I have some forty horses grazing about seven miles out in Carmel Valley and a guard of six soldiers. I go out frequently, spend the night and hunt alone in the morning. And here I must mention that the country is lovely in the extreme, the hills are bare but covered with high grass and wild oats, the slopes and valleys near towns are wooded with pine and live oak, and in the valleys farther off syc-



more and hemlock. You know my fondness for riding, especially in a new country as an explorer. You will be sorry to hear that this has made me instrumental in risking a poor fellow's life. It happened thus. Before our arrival here, there was a guard stationed on shore, composed of marines and sailors. These were posted about town and one at the door of the jail, where some malefactors and troublesome state prisoners were confined. A villainous sailor on post opened the jail, let all escape, enticed his neighbor sentinel to desert and all left the town for the country. They were promptly pursued and after shooting one man, the two sentinels were captured. Either desertion or letting prisoners escape in time of war is death. Both of these fellows were put on board our old ship *Lexington* to await trial, and a few nights since one of them managed to slip thro' a port hole and swim on shore. He took to the woods. About three days ago, Loeser and I rode out to my horse camp, slept there and at daylight started out to hunt. About ten o'clock we stopped at an Indian hut and got some eggs and heard that at a ranche (farm) some distance over the mountain, an American had come the night before, barefooted, very tired and very much distressed. After some inquiries I concluded it was one of our men that had deserted some days before, hired a guide and started for the ranche. The distance was great and it was late in the afternoon before we got there, but the man had gone. Then hearing that the man was in much distress I followed, poor Loeser complaining bitterly of the wild goose chase I was taking him on, till our horses were fairly



broken down. I sent the Indian on, he having procured a fresh horse at the last ranche, and awaited his return. He overtook the man and brought him to me, when to my sorrow he proved to be the poor devil that had run from the *Lexington*, a sailor. He begged me not to take him as his life was forfeited. I knew it, but it was too late. He had to go to Monterey, which was full fifteen miles off. I took him behind me on my old broken-down horse and slowly plodded into town, reaching my quarters at ten o'clock, having had nothing to eat but a couple of eggs fried in tallow and having ridden more than fifty miles. I have turned the sailor over to his ship and he will have to take his chances at a Naval Court Martial. I hope the poor devil will get off thro' some flaw, for I would not like to be the immediate cause of his being hung. As I may remain at Monterey some months I'll make a kind of sketch on the next unruled leaf of Monterey, for you to refer to in case you feel an interest in the place. . . .

"The map <sup>1</sup> is before me and gives the faintest idea of this place, for the picture is unfinished without the rounded hills and green trees and grass that mark it in midwinter. The prospect from a ship at anchor is fine. The amphitheatre in which the town is situated, the green hills back looking as though cultivated, and the groups of live oaks resembling apple trees, all deceive one and make him believe he is looking upon an old highly cultivated country. Such is not however the case, for there is not an orchard or vineyard in the country save those attached to the missions; no fields

<sup>1</sup> An excellent map of Monterey forms part of this letter.

save little patches of beans and wheat planted by Indians and no gardens except the miserable ones begun by foreigners. Everything used by the people comes from abroad save beef. That abounds and is meat and drink for all. Bread can scarcely be purchased in the market and at exorbitant prices, butter the same and even eggs are worth their weight in silver, though every hut might raise its hundreds of chickens. Indeed these people have not done justice to the country, and by law of nature it has passed into hands more enterprising if not more honest and happy. The horses of the country are small and poor, but all admit they are hardy and enduring. Besides, during the recent outbreak Commodore Stockton ordered all the horses to be seized, which was done by the volunteers employed by Col. Frémont and others, who have abused them most wantonly. Since, however, the new dynasty of General Kearny and Commodore Shubrick, these horses are given up to their owners, and I already see a sensible improvement in the stock. We intend to have horses trained for part of our beautiful field battery, so that should Mexico be able to send an army here you may hear of a battery playing a part similar to those in the other Monterey. . . .

"I don't permit myself for a moment to believe that the war with Mexico is over or more than fairly begun, though General Taylor has won his way bravely, skillfully, and victoriously to Saltillo. Mexico is a large country and contains a population who are not averse to the excitement of war. To maintain armies with them is not the costly work it is with us. The loss of

towns they care not for, and the number of valuable lives lost to them is few, whereas our government is stingy, and have set in motion a tremendous machine that they cannot maintain without millions of expense. The volunteers, too, I fear will find it rather hard work to risk being killed, and marching without bread or water for seven dollars a month. However, here we are, already from three to six months behind the world. Peace may now exist. I don't think we'll have much war out here, though it is our duty ever to be on guard. General Kearny will stay here till summer, when, if all is quiet, he will come home by land across the continent leaving Colonel Mason,<sup>1</sup> 1st Dragoons, in command. Four companies of Stevenson's volunteers, (200 men) will be quartered here in Monterey, three companies (150 men) at Santa Barbara, and three companies at San Francisco. Capt. Cooke<sup>2</sup> with about 450 Missouri volunteers that came from Santa Fé, are at Puebla de los Angeles, the capital of California, a town about thirty miles inland and about four hundred miles from here. About a hundred dragoons will be stationed at San Diego. Gen. Kearny tells me also that he expects a regiment of Missouri Volunteers under Col. Price to come across on his Santa Fé trail. These, if good troops, will make an ample force to hold California and to check the incursions of the Indian horse stealers, which will do more towards reconciling the Californians to their new masters than anything else, for, lazy devils though famous horsemen, they

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Richard Barnes Mason, U. S. A.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Philip St. George Cooke, U. S. A.

have not perseverance enough to follow these Indians back to the Toolary [Tulare] plain on the San Joachim, where they live. I will try and follow these fellows, should the Indians steal horses near Monterey, if Gen. Kearny will give me men. A great many emigrants have come into the country, most of whom have been enrolled as volunteers and are to be discharged. The natives complain much of them as robbing them, whether friendly or not, of their horses, cows, beans, everything, regardless of their wishes. This is what aroused them to what is termed the Revolt that was put down just before our arrival. These emigrants intend mostly to *squat* on land about San Francisco, if they go to work. In a few years this will be a prosperous country, but it is so easy here to make a living that soon the imported foreigners, English or Yankees, are just like natives, their children learning from the Indian servants the Spanish language, and none other. Such is the case here, but I'm told it is different up at San Francisco Bay. Many of the officers are purchasing land in this country, but I'll not speculate as I purpose coming back to the United States. We found on the coast a large fleet which has received additions since our arrival. The *Columbus*, 90 guns, Commodore Biddle, the *Independence*, 60, Commodore Shubrick, *Savannah* frigate, *Warren* sloop of war, and the *Lexington* and *Erie* store ships, are now here. The *Congress*, frigate, is at San Diego, *Cyane*, sloop, at San Francisco, *Portsmouth* blockading at Mazatlan and *Preble* daily expected from U. S. convoying the other two vessels of Col. Stevenson, *Loo-Choo* and

*Susan Drew.* Hundreds of naval officers are here, of course, and my room, right by the wharf is the general rendezvous, so that with my duties as an officer on the hill, quarter-master here, and in charge of the camp seven miles off in Carmel Valley, I have my hands full. . . .

"I'm in good health, better pleased with the country than expected, anticipate no fight, but rather a quiet life than otherwise; expect to stay here till we hear of peace and then remove to San Francisco; expect to stay in California till promoted, or the term of service of our men expires, which will be in 1850 and 1851. Better to make up my mind to that so as to be prepared for disappointment, which I should certainly experience, if I made plans like our Captain to come home immediately upon the close of war. He cannot do it, nor could I, till permission be given and that would take a full year to receive by writing to Washington. . . ."

"MONTEREY, California, *April* 25, 1847.

". . . I have my horse and gun and am in the hills all the time when not on duty. Deer are pretty plenty, but I want to kill a grizzly bear, the terror of the land. . . . There is no war here or appearance of it. Everything is settled down and quiet save some of the wild Indians known as horse-stealers. They are to be pursued by a company of volunteers who will have a wild goose chase of it I fear. Gen. Kearny made an attempt to get some Californians to agree to serve the United States in this company to go for the Indians, but they still fear we will give up the Californians when

the war is over, and then the Mexican government would be sure to be down on them for favoring our cause. A few, only seven, agreed to serve. However, the country is filling up so rapidly with emigrants that the native population will be lost. Such is already the case up at the Bay of San Francisco, but here and farther south the natives predominate. . . .

"Yesterday I read the President's<sup>1</sup> message, and today the Secretary of War's<sup>2</sup> report, both of which touch upon the affairs of California and give unbounded praise to Frémont. These praises are only partly due. He is a most energetic man, but of late has allowed his ambition to mislead him. Some months before we arrived, there was an outbreak here in consequence of little provocations, such as quartering a midshipman and five or a dozen sailors as a garrison in a large town, contemptuous expressions and actions. Frémont and Stockton were in the act of putting down this insurrection when they heard of Gen. Kearny's arrival from Santa Fé. You know enough of rank to know that at once Frémont as Lieut. Colonel must yield to Kearny as General, but he would not, said he was Governor of California and superior to Kearny. A series of events occurred, which no doubt you have read in the papers, which, had it not been for General Kearny's mildness and decision, would have led to a civil war. However, whilst Frémont was holding his court at Puebla de los Angeles, four hundred miles south of this, Gen. Kearny comes here, makes his arrangements

<sup>1</sup> James K. Polk.

<sup>2</sup> William L. Marcy.



with Commodores Shubrick and Biddle, awaits the arrival of Stevenson's Regiment, also the Mormon battalion from Santa Fé, puts all in possession, summons Frémont here and makes him obey his original orders. Were it not for Fremont's strong friends at court, his commission would be forfeit. Col. Mason is here, having just come up from Puebla where he discharged Frémont's volunteers, the original Bear party,<sup>1</sup> men of buckram, sheepskin, and buckskin, who scorn civilization. Stevenson's men are a hard set, and it is still a question whether they are a blessing or a curse to the country. Several are now under trial by a court martial for offences that may cause them to be shot. I believe that Gen. Kearny designs keeping Stevenson so situated that he cannot do much harm. Here he is at headquarters where the General or Col. Mason can prevent his exceeding his authority. . . .

"Gen. Kearny is soon going to make a tour of California, and is going to take me along as his staff officer. This I shall like, as it will enable me to see all the country and be thrown in contact with men that are to influence this new country. This tour will consume probably two weeks, after which the General will leave for St. Louis by way of Fort Hall. You have my map and can trace routes. This will come by the Gila route down south. . . . Promotions are going on very fast, I suppose, and to it alone must I look for my chance of getting back. I still place the date some years forward. Rumors are now here from Sonora of a great battle

<sup>1</sup> The "Bear Flag Republic," supported by Frémont's troops.

fought at Saltillo.<sup>1</sup> Former rumors have been quite true, and if this one is only partly so, we have again been victorious and terrible havoc done. I fear that I leaped the mark in search of glory by coming to California, but such is the cast of fortune and all must abide its decrees. . . .”

“MONTEREY, California, *May 1, 1847.*

“. . . I was out all the day before yesterday tramping over the mountains to get a shot at a grizzly bear. I saw one, but the fellow made tracks and I pursued till I was exhausted and sick, and really I feel sick yet. My poor horse no doubt hopes I will continue so till he can recover his spirits in the wild oats pasture that he enjoys during my temporary confinement. I am now officer of the day and have been writing on business all day. An expedition started today to seek the horse-stealing Indians and on Monday Colonel Stevenson embarks in our old ship *Lexington* for San Pedro with two of his companies, whence they march to Puebla de los Angeles, the former capital of this Territory. General Kearny is sick and has not said anything to me lately about his trip south, but I have no doubt he will make the tour and take me along as his staff officer agreeably to his promise. This will enable me to see the whole of Alta California, an opportunity I much desire.

“There are a great many strangers flocking into Monterey and soon the original Spanish population

<sup>1</sup> The greater part of Sherman's regiment, the Third Artillery, was in the fights at Saltillo and Buena Vista, February 22-23, 1847.

will disappear before the progress of American intruders. Lawyers, doctors, too, are coming in, much to the mortification of all people, as they must do something to live by, and will soon produce dissension, for not a poor devil, native, Indian or foreigner, has a paper to show his title to land and houses. Moreover, no person knows the limit of his own property, so that the ranches overlap and several claim the same hill and valley. This is to be expected and will offer plenty of employment for lawyers, though it will produce distress in the land. A ranche is a farm, consisting of one, two and sometimes as much as a dozen leagues square. On each there is generally a house or hut made of adobes (unburned brick) covered with rushes and clapboards; near it, a pen called a corral where at night the horses and cattle are herded to be safe from theft by the Indians. Near some of the ranches there are small fields of wheat, corn, potatoes and beans, but these are by no means plenty as it is difficult to hoe potatoes on horseback, and any employment on foot is degrading. No one will plant seed unless necessity compels them. The ox pulls the plough which is nothing but a stick sharpened and sometimes shod with a piece of iron. A tree-top is a hammer and the hand is the hoe. The old missionary Indians do most of the labor, thus becoming the slave of the Spaniard in return for the benefits of a religion they neither understand or comprehend. This, however, was not the case till the missionary priests were stripped of all temporal power in the country by the Mexican government some years ago. Since that act, nearly all the

missions are without priests and in decay. There is a priest here, but none at San Carmelo, four miles from here. There is a mission in operation about thirty-five miles from here called St. Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist) which has its priest, work-shops, orchards, etc., with some horses and cattle. Still, it has received a vital blow by depriving the priests of the necessary power and authority over the persons resident at the mission.

"Ord and I rode out one day and got there Sunday morning at ten o'clock. We rode in at the open angle of a square space, enclosed by adobe buildings, some two stories high and the most prominent one being a church with a bell hung in a wooden frame before the door. We saw several horses hitched about and hearing the church music, we tied our horses and walked in. It was a high, long rectangular room, with the altar at the further extremity. The mass was going on, the priest in the usual robes, candles lighted, the women were grouped quite close to the altar, and the men close to the wall on either side, leaving a wide space intervening. The church was comparatively empty, but all were most intent upon the devotions. Stillness was broken only by the choir of violins, triangles and jingling instruments, occasionally assisted by Indian music of a plaintive, peculiar sound. This could have been but a faint imitation of the former magnificence of some of the missions which boasted of its [their] thousands of horses, cattle and laboring Indians. The mass did not last long and church broke up without a sermon, after which the appearance of two strange officers fully

armed among them excited some attention but no rudeness. These people are very polite indeed. We went with the crowd to the Tienda, or grog shop, where some drank aguardiente, some gambled at cards, and the better part, including the priest in his gray robes and cap, passed into an inner room to play billiards. We were told that the 'Padre' played a first rate game of billiards. We did not see him attempt it, though he looked on as a connoisseur. Neither that priest or the one here can talk English, though the latter is styled the American from favoring our cause. He has no reason to be disappointed, for it was absurd in Mexico pretending to govern this territory, and poor California was not capable of governing herself. 'Tis but fair, then, that she should be assisted and no nation can do it better than our own, as heretofore our vessels have engrossed the trade of the country and resident American citizens are the most influential men of the country.

"I have heard several of the Californians say that had it not been for Commodore Stockton's measures for subduing the people here, there never would have been the least resistance to the change of flags. No one here now dreams of a retrocession to Mexico, though all admit that these Guachos or Rancheros are not afraid of us, and if encouraged from Mexico would try again the chances of war, more for the fun of the fight than with any ultimate design of securing their own independence. Last accounts from home represent peace as far off as ever. This country must remain *in statu quo* till the war is over, when the question will arise,

shall California be annexed? All here take it for granted that such will be the case. I do not think California will ever be much of an agricultural country or rich in any other way, but it will be useful to our ships in the Pacific, supplying them with safe harbors for repair, for water and provisions. Under the old Mexican rule the charges and impositions on ships and cargoes were so heavy that few came. Now, however, we already see a change. Both San Francisco and Monterey bays are quite filled with ships. Still, clothing and stores of all kinds, save beef, are exceedingly dear. . . ."

"SONOMA, California, *July 11, 1847.*

"I arrived here last night with a party of seamen, to arrest a citizen who is kind of rebellious and needs a little military law. I shall take him tonight, by force, down the bay of San Francisco to the U. S. Ship *Columbus*.<sup>1</sup>

"By a mere accident I met here a Mr. Norris, clerk or secretary to Commodore Stockton, whose camp is fifteen miles from here and who starts this evening for the United States sure. The Commodore is half crazy and has been buying a ranche, and doing other California acts of foolishness, and winds up by his land cruise home. He has a fine set of horses and hopes to get home in September. I continue well, as you may infer by my riding about so, but I will have to send you

<sup>1</sup> The capture of Nash, resisting his removal as Alcalde of Sonoma, by General Kearny, is described fully in the *Memoirs*, I, 58-65.



a map home that you may trace my journeys. I am now at a little village, quite American, at the head of the Bay of San Francisco, forty miles from the town at the mouth of the harbor, and about two hundred from Monterey.<sup>1</sup>

"I expect to grab a fellow tonight, a sort of state prisoner, that may end in a row, but I have laid such a plan that I expect to get him out of the village without its being known. Everything is quiet in the country. We know of the capture of Vera Cruz, the battle of Cerro Gordo and the advance of the army as far as Puebla. These brilliant scenes nearly kill us, who are so far off, and deprived of such precious pieces of military glory. This war still rages, it seems, in Mexico, and the President seems to find more trouble to check it than he imagined.

"Mr. Benton's letter declining to accept the Major Generalship is regarded by us as a most beautiful instance of vain-glorious confidence that he, as a civilian, does not approve of movements and plans he does not comprehend, and declines to take a subordinate command under Taylor or Scott. A good excuse and a happy riddance to the Army.

"We feel the effect of the late success of our army even here. It has excited some of the Mexican families even to tears, and to treat with rudeness those of our officers who were before quite favorites. They pretend that General Scott's course at Vera Cruz was cruel and Taylor's in laying a contribution still more so. Poor Mexico! she is entitled to the sympathies of every

<sup>1</sup> Overestimated.

human person, whilst her constant defeats, under the most favorable circumstances, cannot but excite feelings of contempt. I write in haste, for Norris is booted and spurred, and had not the most distant idea of meeting anybody here. This will be the latest date that leaves California unless Stockton takes another Paseo to the South. My latest dates from you are of October 1846, ten months, too long, dearest, to be at all comfortable. I know you are not to blame but have written without success. Your letters may come in time.

"I do not like California as a country. It is dry and barren notwithstanding some of the glowing accounts. I have been in its garden spots and regard them only as beautiful and fertile in contrast to the dry parched-up hills that envelope them. Several of the officers are buying ranches and town lots, but I wouldn't give two counties of Ohio, Kentucky or Tennessee for the whole of California.

"Mr. Norris is waiting and I must close the last note from California by the Sailor General Grandioso, Stockton. He is a great blatherscyte, talks too much and does too little. May he have a pleasant passage and bring this to you and find you well."

"MONTEREY, California, *November 10, 1847.*

"I have not heard from you since last January though several ships have arrived from Boston, but we expect a couple of ships from New York, and Uncle Charles<sup>1</sup> will send by them anything he may have. I

<sup>1</sup> Charles Hoyt, of Brooklyn, brother of Sherman's mother.

am so completely banished that I feel I am losing all hope, all elasticity of spirits. I feel ten years older than I did when I sailed, and though my health is good I do not feel that desire for exercise I formerly did. To hear of war in Mexico and the brilliant deeds of the army, of my own regiment and my own old associates, everyone of whom has gained honors, and I out here in California, banished from fame, from everything that is dear and no more prospect of ever getting back than one of the old adobe houses that mark a California ranche! There are so few officers here that if one does get orders or promotion, he can't go, because he can't be spared. One of our officers is promoted and ordered home, but they won't let him go; why? because he has to wait for relief and it will take a year for his successor to come out to take his place, and now that the novelty of the thing is over, I fear no officers will be so great fools as we were, to break their necks to get here. However, [now] that I am here, I must make the best of a bad bargain. I keep a house, and three of the officers mess with me, and I wish you could see the household. A widow Spanish woman is the housekeeper, and an Indian man kind of cook, and a black boy we brought out with us is the servant. This is a new concern, got up down town because the rainy season makes it too uncomfortable to walk up the hill to the fort from the Governor's office, where I am daily engaged, upon the whole quite as comfortable as I might be elsewhere though not so satisfactory as in Mexico, where an opportunity is offered to all to gain personal and professional experience if not military fame. . . ."

“MONTEREY, California,

“*February 3, 1848.*

“. . . This is the season of dancing and there has been a good deal of it, in fact one is looked for every Sunday night. The officers gave the ‘great ball’ of the season on New Year’s Eve. You have no doubt heard of the Mexican custom of filling egg shells with cologne and other fragrant water to break upon passers by. Here it is carried to a great extent, but is confined to the house and chiefly at balls and dances. Here the shells are mostly filled with gilt and colored paper cut very fine, which broken over the head leave it covered with spangles. The ladies break over the gentlemen’s heads and the reverse, and so great are the liberties taken to accomplish the feat that some from behind will clasp your arms tight whilst others shower on the ‘Cascarones’ (filled shells). Here they do not like the shells filled with perfumed water as it produces stains on the dresses, and also colds to which these people are very subject. It is polite to avoid a Cascarone and even to grasp a lady’s hand to crush the shell in it, if she be in the act of breaking it, but when a gentleman gets a Cascarone on his head he is bound to return it which is sometimes quite difficult when the ladies are skilled in dodging. You can scarcely imagine the extent to which this is carried. At a small party a few nights ago, there were upwards of four hundred Cascarones broken among a party of not over twenty-five persons. The ladies sit all day clipping up their tinsel, the finer the more valuable, and the whole is destroyed in a few hours’ flirting. As I mentioned, a gentleman who is

honored by an egg, for it is conceived a compliment, is bound in courtesy to return it and has to pay sometimes as high as one or even five dollars for an egg shell filled with tinsel stuff. I have often laughed to see a whole party of grown men, myself included, sitting round a table clipping this stuff in preparation for a coming dance, but the customs of Monterey are as sensible as the customs of other places, and must be respected. . . .

"Candidly I must admit that I entertain no sure prospect of getting home from here under three years more and not even thus soon if the war continues, for the regular officers are so scarce here that no commanding officer here will let one go even if promoted and ordered elsewhere. . . . Yet no blame can be attached to the government, for it is the natural and proper operation of affairs. The worst will be to be disbanded out here, as I fear will be the case at the close of the war, for we, not doing anything brilliant that has been the round of the newspapers, must step aside to give place to those volunteer officers who have gained a name. But I hope old Taylor will be President and will have sufficient sense to dispose of matters properly. Old Taylor is a slow thinking, good man and will make a better President than most politicians, for he is honest, as is proven by his whole history, and has no preexpressed political opinions to bring his nose to the grindstone. . . ."

"MONTEREY, California, *April 10, 1848.*

"The time is rapidly approaching when Lieut. Carson, the Kit Carson of Frémont's narratives, will start for home. He goes from Los Angeles to Santa

Fé, and thence to Saint Louis where he will put his mail in the Post Office, a long and rough route to entrust papers to, but letters have come that way and may possibly go again. . . .

"The other day a vessel arrived from Mazatlan and brought some newspapers which had come through Mexico. One, of December 6, contained a brilliant description of General Taylor's reception at New Orleans. How proud the old man must be! I hope they won't spoil him, as I see from the papers he is likely to be our President. Our dates from Mexico city are of January 6, when General Scott was in quiet possession of the city, and in fact of the most important places in the country. On this side Commodore Shubrick is at Mazatlan, with two or three hundred sailors on shore. They are tired enough of it, and every effort is making to get volunteers to replace the sailors but thus far without success. The Americans here will not volunteer again, and Colonel Mason has been compelled to buy a vessel and send her to Oregon, to try there and arouse the Americans to a sense of patriotism to go to Mazatlan, but I fear the emigrants there are not very anxious to exhibit their patriotism in that way.

"Mazatlan is a tolerably important place, about 12,000 people, brick houses, paved streets and hotels, luxuries not known higher up. They import a great deal there from some cities in the interior, and it is also the point whence much silver is exported. Now Uncle Sam appears to be hard up and has imitated Mexico so well in the science of squeezing money out of the poor



people of Mexico, that we are a little ahead of them. At Mazatlan they have collected a good deal of money, and Commodore Shubrick is loth to give it up, but it is an open roadstead and ships cannot lie there in the summer months when the coast is frequented by the most dreadful hurricanes, so unless the Oregonians are a little more patriotic than the emigrants were, Uncle Sam will be compelled to give up one place on this side of the continent. In Lower California the people have been in arms all winter and have disturbed the peace of the small garrisons not a little, and our last accounts state that they had managed to catch a couple of midshipmen with eight sailors. One of the midshipmen was named Duncan, son of Dr. Duncan of Cincinnati, a great stout fellow that ought to have whipped half a dozen Californians, but our accounts do not recount the manner of their capture. I have no apprehensions that they will be ill used, but they will be short of eatables and must keep up their flesh and spirits on dried beef.

“Lower California is a great distance from here, as far as Florida from Maine, with this difference that a vessel never or very seldom goes from here to Lower California unless she be specially chartered. It is entirely cut off from Upper California by a villainous range of country that is almost impassable, so that although the people of Lower California have been in open rebellion, those of Upper California have become as quiet as lambs. Not an act or deed have they committed that has afforded ground of disquiet, and even for the past four months we have not had even a rumor of an out-

break, so that we may put it down as subject, and ready for the orders of Congress. O that that great body would declare this 'God-forsaken land' free and independent, a part of the Great Republic, declare martial law at an end, military force unnecessary and let us go where it is necessary! But this is a foolish dream which I know cannot be attempted. These Californians are quiet because we have five or six hundred men, strung through their midst that would likely detect the first move in any serious row, call a military commission and hang a few. Now very few people here have love enough for Mexico to run that risk. They do not love us, they do not like our ways, our institutions, our restlessness. Our internal taxes, our labors all are too complicated for their lazy brains, and lazy hands. All they want is a *bueno cavallo* (good horse) a lasso, a glazed hat and tassels, a flashy serapa, slashed pantaloons tipped with velvet and corded with bright silk ties, and a pair of spurs as big as a plate. Then he is happy, sits down and eats his greasy platter of beans and mutton and pities the poor Yankees. The women are better, kinder, and more industrious. They have to wash all the clothes, grind all the corn on a stone by rubbing another over it, plant their patches of onions and red peppers, and do all the cooking. Some of them are quite pretty, amiable, and have good minds which if cultivated would make them above the average. As they now are, however, they are servants. In the towns they pretend to some luxury, have pictures hanging on the walls, looking glasses, Yankee clocks, and a sofa. Carpets are very rare and no fires until the Yankees began to

burn brick and build fire-places. Now they wonder they did not do so before. But the truth is, simply, that all that the Mexicans attempt to arrive at is the state of their forefathers. Those living in a warm country had no fire-places and these concluded that none were needed here, and if you were to transplant a Mexican from his native city to Canada he would not think of warming his house by artificial heat. Many a night have I shivered in a big cold adobe house but little consoled by the assertion that this is a mild climate.

"I have during the past winter hunted a good deal, mostly for wild geese, which abound on the plains of Salinas, about eighteen miles from here. Generally two or three of us go together, taking spare animals to pack the game. Sometimes we go to a ranche to sleep, but invariably we prefer sleeping out upon the open plain. Yesterday I returned from a hunt. The days were intensely hot, but we had frost each night and ice formed on the edge of the pond near which we slept. Yet the letter writers assert that frost and ice are unknown here. This climate is severer than that of Charleston, but, dearest Ellen, I am writing about what cannot interest you. The country such as it is you will, I hope, never see or care about, but so perfectly devoid of interest is everything about me that I have nothing else to write about. Since I wrote you last I have been constantly in Monterey engaged principally in my office duties but I hope soon more officers will arrive here, when I will relinquish my present berth for one of more activity and out-door exercise. . . ."

"MONTEREY, California, *August 28, 1848.*

". . . I have felt tempted to send my resignation to Washington and I really feel ashamed to wear epaulettes after having passed through a war without smelling gunpowder, but God knows I couldn't help it and so I'll let things pass.

"I scratched off a long letter to Phil today, telling him as near as I could the state of affairs here, of the gold mines,<sup>1</sup> of the news of peace,<sup>2</sup> and the condition of things in consequence. Many despatches on these subjects go home with this, as also private letters that will get into the papers, and it is useless to repeat, so I'll tell you simply that since my return from the mines I have been and still am living very comfortably in the family of Dona Augustias, the very first lady of Monterey and in fact of California. She is very kind and intelligent and her pretty little daughter Manuelita makes a good sister. The husband Don Manuel Jimeno passes most of his time on his ranche about forty miles off, so that I am a species of guardian to the family. I have not been so comfortably situated for a long time and know it cannot be of long duration, as Colonel Mason will, soon after the squadron comes up from Mazatlan, go to the gold mines to be in the midst of the population of the country. I go along, of course, and will try if possible to pick up some of the loose particles so plenty and abundant. During our former visit we were hurried by the state of

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's observations on the discovery of gold in California are fully set forth in the *Memoirs*, I, 68-88.

<sup>2</sup> The ratifications of the treaty of peace were exchanged May 30, 1848. The official news did not reach Sherman till September. *Memoirs*, I, 85.

affairs, but now that the war is over and the volunteers soon to be discharged we can stay there a longer time.

"Monterey is now nearly abandoned by the male population, and the same may be said of San Francisco and other towns. All are gone to the gold mines. We have no mails from any part of the world and seldom receive letters—as complete a banishment as was ever imposed upon criminals. We look, however, to this gold to open the channels of the world to us, but this will require a long time, and probably before it happens we may have a chance to get home. I do not anticipate such chance now, for with the war stops all chance of promotion, and at the latest dates from Washington, viz. December of last year, I was a lieutenant still. My chance of continuing so is, therefore, good. I am high on the list and would have been promoted by this time if the war had continued. The state of feeling of the Mexican people toward the Yankees is of such a hostile character that peace cannot last long. They want and deserve richly a better whipping than they have got, and they will have to receive it before they are content. You, of course, are horrified at anything like war, but you cannot imagine anything like the obstinate pride, egotism and nonsense that characterize them as a people. These, in California, are bad enough, but in Mexico they are far worse. . . ."

"SAN FRANCISCO, California,

"March 5, 1849.

"The Steamer *California* arrived at Monterey on the 23 of February and has turned us all crazy. I received a good lot of letters, yours and Phil's, from May till

December last. You can hardly imagine the effect of this arrival upon us poor devils out here, who, for years had received scarce a letter once in six months. Until this arrival I had not heard from you or any of my correspondents for a whole year. Merchant ships would not bring letters lest they might convey mercantile intelligence, and there is now no doubt that many a mail bag was cast into the sea. Indeed, a man of war picked up a letter for me floating in the Pacific Ocean. But at last a regular mail has come and we begin to feel better. Still the steamer is here, out of coal, and all her hands have gone to the gold mines, so that it is doubtful whether she will return for a long while. An opportunity now offers to send to San Blas, Mexico, from which place letters may cross to Vera Cruz and thence to the U. S. When the steamer arrived at Monterey I was Adjutant General to Col. Mason and living most comfortably in the family of Dona Augustias. When Gen. Smith <sup>1</sup> arrived he offered to take me as his staff officer. I preferred being ordered to the U. S., but he said he could not do so for the present, so I stay as his Adjutant General, headquarters San Francisco. I did not like to leave Monterey, but it was to my interest to come with General Smith and here I am. How long I am to stay no one knows. The Adjutant General at Washington writes in October last that the Artillery Company will be relieved in the course of eighteen months. That settles the question and I have really little or no hopes of ever getting back. I would resign but it would take two years to conduct

<sup>1</sup> General Persifor F. Smith.



the correspondence and by that time the favorable chance will have passed. This country is worse than ever. A house cannot be rented here for any price and men will hire for twenty times the wages of any other country on earth. I really don't see how our officers can stand it much longer. I'll make great efforts to get away when the 2nd Infantry arrives in May. I will then try and go to the gold mines myself. I have already been there twice with Col. Mason to gather information, and I see by the newspapers that that information has turned half the United States crazy. There is no doubt that gold exists in great abundance in California, that fortunes have been made and are now making, but these will be less as the number of competitors increase. I am glad to hear that ships are coming out with clothing, etc. I am out and can't afford to pay the exorbitant prices now charged. . . ."

The change in Sherman's fortunes which this letter indicates, the transfer from the command of Colonel Mason to that of General Smith, from Monterey to San Francisco, was soon to lead to the greater change for which he had almost ceased to hope. After ten more months filled with a variety of experiences in the country suddenly metamorphosed by the discovery of gold, he was assigned the coveted duty of delivering despatches to General Winfield Scott in New York, and at the beginning of January, 1850, he sailed for home by way of Panama, arriving in New York about a month later.

## IV

### TWO YEARS IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

1850—1852

THE brief chapter of Sherman's life for which the following letters speak was, with one important exception, less eventful than the chapters before and after it. The letters deal with matters of less general concern, and may be represented by a mere handful of their more interesting passages. The exceptional event—his marriage on May 1, 1850, to Miss Ellen Boyle Ewing at the Washington house of her father, then Secretary of the Interior in Taylor's Cabinet—was of course an event of crowning importance in Sherman's more personal history. But it is not the purpose of this volume to open wide the doors of intimacy which Sherman's own reserve kept closed throughout his *Memoirs*. It is enough to realize that the letters henceforth are addressed not to Miss Ewing but to Mrs. Sherman.

About four months after his marriage he went, in September of 1850, to join his company of the Third Artillery at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis. Shortly after arriving there he received news that four new captains had been added to the Commissary Department, and that he was one of them. His duties from

this time until September of 1852 were chiefly at St. Louis. Then he was transferred to New Orleans, where the few remaining months of this period of his life were passed. There would have been no letters to Mrs. Sherman but that for considerable portions of the time she was with her family at Lancaster, Ohio.

“SAINT LOUIS, Mo.,

“*January 25, 1851.*

“ . . . My days are nearly all alike and of an evening I visit some one or more of my acquaintances. Night before last I attended a fancy ball, given by a Mrs. Russell, one of the rich persons of this city. Two brothers occupy a house so arranged that they can be thrown open into one, making four large parlors on the first floor, and four large rooms on the second. The supper room was up stairs and the dancing below, there being a band of music for each set of parties. It was one of the finest parties I ever saw and far surpassed in splendor anything I ever saw before, excepting probably a masked ball I once attended in New Orleans. The room was crowded with elegantly dressed Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Jews, French and English of the old and modern school, with every variety of monks, nuns, of any age and time. Yankees and boatmen, with Dutch musicians all mingled together, made groups as novel as picturesque. The officers, many dressed in full dress uniform, all played their parts to admiration and I never saw ladies appear better, in their pretty Greek costumes, some with skirts of pure gold. I went at ten o'clock, and came away at two A. M., but the party

did not break up until four. I was very temperate and intended to leave at one, before supper, but Mr. Russell would not let me go, so I had to remain and do my share toward consuming the elegant supper of all the substantials and delicacies that he had provided. Hardie<sup>1</sup> and his Susan were there, and he did not get to bed until an hour after two.

"There has been great rejoicing in this city among the politicians at Benton's defeat. The great 'I am,' seems to be humbled at last, and I am glad because it is a just retribution for his vindictive abuse of Generals Kearny and Mason because they interfered with the ambitious designs of his son-in-law, Frémont. . . ."

"INDEPENDENCE, Missouri,

"May 21, Friday, 1852.

"I find myself here, on a rainy day, and know no better disposition to make of my time than to write to you. I last wrote from Fort Leavenworth. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

"Fort Leavenworth is in the Indian Country on the west bank of the Missouri River, on a high promontory, affording a beautiful prospect down and up the river, and of the opposite Missouri shore. Tuesday proving a most beautiful day I ordered my horse to be saddled, and, putting a change of underclothing in a cavalry valise buckled behind the saddle, and wearing my overcoat, the common one, not dragoon, I mounted the steed, which I found to be a long legged sorrel dragoon

<sup>1</sup> First Lieut. James A. Hardie, later Major-General U. S. A.

<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1852 Sherman went to Fort Leavenworth "on duty, partly to inspect a lot of cattle."—*Memoirs*, I, 117.

horse, which having crossed more than once the plains was pronounced by the soldier a good traveller. He may have been once, but his joints now are stiff, and his muscles weak, so that he moves with evident reluctance, with the constant aid of spurs, and an evident mental determination to split me in two. Thus mounted I sallied forth, bound down the steep hill to the river, which I crossed in the ferry boat. The road for the first three miles lay in the Missouri bottom, filled with immense trees, and the ground a deep black mud, just like the river bottoms in Ohio. The road then strikes the hard firm ground which is rolling, cut up into hills and valleys very much like the country near Mount Vernon [Ohio]. I had expected to find a common prairie country, but was much mistaken, and agreeably so, for I never beheld prettier or finer farms anywhere. New brick houses all along the road, with cattle, sheep, horses, etc., in abundance show a good condition of things, and upon inquiry I found that the County Platte, opposite Fort Leavenworth is next in population and wealth to that of Saint Louis. The day was very fine, so passing through the county seat, Platte City, and on for twenty-six miles I reached my first stopping place, Mr. Gordon's, the lame man you met in the office, the day of letting the contract. None of the family except the overseer was at home, but said all would be back in the evening, having gone to Liberty. He had dinner got for me, and then showed me the place. Mr. Gordon is a very wealthy man having six thousand acres of fine land, more than two thousand under fence; counts his cattle, horses and mules by

the hundreds, has his flour, saw and threshing mills, and cultivates with slave labor. I did not expect to see so fine and extensive a farm; his house was a two story frame, with a brick wing standing back. A yard with ornamental trees enclosed the house, with stable yard, cow yard, etc., distributed around. As night approached, the children, three boys and two girls, returned from school two miles off, and shortly after Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, with a young lady from town, rode up on horseback. They received me very well, and could not possibly have treated me better. I stayed there all of next day, visiting on horseback different pastures, some of which are five miles from the house. In the course of the day we discussed fully the contract he had agreed to make. I found him perfectly fair, though anxious if possible to obtain various modifications and stipulations, very few of which I could grant, and yesterday morning we rode to Liberty his county seat, where we entered into the formal contract for the delivery in New Mexico of 1340 beef cattle. We then parted, he repeatedly inviting me if ever I came to Leavenworth to renew the visit and if possible to bring you along, a promise I promptly made and which it is not very improbable we will fulfil. That business was all I had to attend to, but on my old rule never to return by the road I had come, I determined to go back to the fort by this side of the river. Accordingly after dinner I remounted old Foggy, and prevailed on him to carry me to the river, six miles, and then six further to this 'City,' the great starting place for the Great West, California, Oregon and New Mexico. It is a busy



thriving town of 2,000 inhabitants, has a good court house and public square, lined with stores containing everything that a traveller on the plains can ask for. The streets bounding the court house square extend back for a long distance having many pretty, neat houses with yards as much like the country towns of Ohio as two peas, except this town is newer and apparently more thriving—this, the Noland House, being the biggest hotel. I rode up and true to my luck found several people of my acquaintance, one a Mr. Mason of Fort Atkinson and another Mr. F. X. Aubrey who is considered the most ‘rapid man’ in the Santa Fé trade, who is always *just* arriving from New Mexico. I did think of staying here only a few hours, but they prevailed on me to stop all night and I woke up this morning to find myself storm-bound. Yet I am not sorry for I have learned many things here, which it is my interest to know, have talked a good deal with Aubrey and others about new roads and cut offs, and about affairs generally in New Mexico, and the road thither. If you should hear of my joining some expedition or other, you must not be surprised, for had I authority or permission I would certainly make some summer trip of the kind. A great many have gone to California from here, and yet more are going. Mule teams and ox teams are loaded in the streets and California subjects are careering about, before bidding a last adieu to houses, stores, trees, and other luxuries they will not soon see again. A train started yesterday for Chihuahua in Mexico, with goods imported from France. I mention this merely to show the variety of things done in this city. . . .”

“SAINT LOUIS, Mo., May 30, 1852.

“. . . I wrote you last from Independence. As I expected, the weather cleared up enough and after dinner I started. Twelve miles of good road brought me to Westport, a town on the very verge of the state of Missouri. Thence to Fort Leavenworth lay through the country of the Shawanese and Delawares. Enquiring the road I determined to make twelve miles more, so as to make an easy journey for the following day. The house where I was to sleep was that of one Monday, blacksmith of the Delawares, on the north side of the Caw River.<sup>1</sup> There were no houses by the way and the road being recently cut up by the California wagons, the old road appeared faint compared with a new one made by the emigrants so that I got on the wrong track, and at night found myself fifteen miles on the bank of a swollen creek, seeing many Indian huts on the opposite bank. I hailed and was motioned to cross. I did so, the water being about saddle skirt deep. When over I found an Indian who could talk English, who explained to me where I had taken the wrong road, and that I was eight miles from Monday's ferry. It was then dark and too late to rectify my mistake, so I had to make a virtue of necessity and ask to stay all night. I was taken to the house of a Chief, a hewn log house, with one room, two good beds, looking glass, pictures, etc.—very snug indeed for an Indian. The old man had gone to Washington on some business, but the old lady squaw, with her son, daughter-in-law

<sup>1</sup> The Kaw or Kansas River. *Memoirs*, I, 118. Monday's house and ferry seem to have been near the site of Kansas City.

and some boys, was at home. They got me supper, coffee, bacon and eggs, and corn bread, and set a table with knives, forks, dishes, etc., as good as any frontier whites. After eating my supper and talking with the young man who talked English, I made arrangements to have one of the boys at daylight show me the nearest road to the ferry, paid fifty cents for my supper and corn for my horse, and then enquired where I should sleep. He said in the big bed. I saw it was a feather bed with calico curtains enough to stifle anybody, much more an asthmatic; so I insisted upon not disturbing the family arrangements, but asked for a blanket which, with my saddle and blanket, would make a soldier's bed outside. But after some time they made a straw bed in a shed outside where the younger boys slept, and where also their harness, saddles, etc., were kept. Accordingly, though the smell of musty corn and saddle blankets was strong, I turned in booted and spurred, and barring the rats jumping over my face a little too often for comfort's sake I made out for the night. Before day I aroused the boy, and started on the back track, till he put me on the right road from which by sunrise I was on the banks of the Caw river, and soon after ferried across to 'Monday's.' There I stayed several hours to rest my horse and get breakfast, after which resuming the journey, I rode quietly along over a beautiful country of prairie or timber land, reaching the fort late in the afternoon. . . ."

"ST. LOUIS, MO.,

"September 30, 1852.

"I have just received the sad tidings of poor Mother's<sup>1</sup> death, so sudden, and unexpected to me. The telegraph failed to deliver it to me, and I am glad it took the slower road, for it is now known to me that though sudden, she died easily and that all was done that could be done to prolong her stay on earth.

"Poor Mother! she has had hard times, and nothing but the kindest, most affectionate and simplest heart would have borne her up under her varied fortune. Hardly a week since I had a long letter from her in her usual style telling me of her childish delight at the sights she saw at Cleveland. . . . I did think that in case I could so arrange matters at New Orleans as to make it convenient for her to come, I would invite her to come with you. I wrote her so and she was delighted with the idea. I knew she would, but it is ordained otherwise. . . .

"Mother's letter to me is dated the 21st of September in which she reiterates how good her health was, and how she stood the exposure at the fair better than the girls. Taylor's<sup>2</sup> letter telling me of her fatal sickness is dated the 23rd only two days [later]. Could Mother have been sick and flattering herself that she was so well? I fear so."

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's mother, Mary Hoyt, was, like his father, a native of Norwalk, Conn. She died in Mansfield, Ohio.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Taylor Sherman, an older brother.

“NEW ORLEANS, *November 4, 1852.*

“. . . At this moment the wires are busy in bringing the minute details of General Scott's utter defeat,<sup>1</sup> such an overwhelming defeat as never before shocked the nerves of any presidential candidate. I feel for the General and regret to hear in what bad taste he expresses himself at a result so general that silence alone should mask his feelings. For my part, I am sorry at the result, but feel that the army is better off with a Democratic administration which has always a strong majority in congress to carry out the measures the party thinks prudent and right. Here, Cuba is all the go, but I don't know what the northern Democrats think on the subject. If Cuba can be got fairly, it will be a beautiful state, and I would not object to a station at the Havannah as commissary. Of that in due time.

“Since my arrival I have not lost sight of the necessary preparations for your coming. Boarding is exorbitantly high, beyond our means, house-keeping too is no sinecure, but then we can endeavor to control expenses. There are many houses for rent, all by custom by the year dating November 1. I have taken one on Magazine Street, about six or eight squares from the office, in a very genteel neighborhood, and decidedly better than our last abode on Chouteau Avenue [St. Louis]. Paved streets and side-walks continue far beyond the house and an omnibus passes every few minutes, running to the limits of the city in one direction, and starting from Canal Street the heart of this curious emporium. . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Franklin Pierce received 254 electoral votes, Winfield Scott, 42.

"NEW ORLEANS, *December 2, 1852.*

"I hasten to acknowledge the receipt this morning of your mother's letter for which I wish you to thank her.<sup>1</sup> The mails are so slow and uncertain that I have little patience with them. . . .

"Here no one makes society a pleasure or study, but an excitement to kill time. When you arrive you must expect but few calls, and not much calling and visiting. Everybody goes to shows, theatres, and operas for pastimes, and Sunday more especially. . . . Yesterday very early in the morning by invitation I joined General Twiggs<sup>2</sup> and party of officers to go down to inspect Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. These are on the banks of the Mississippi River, opposite each other and seventy-five miles from here. We went down in the Government steamer *Fashion* and reached our destination by three P. M. The shores all the way down are lined with sugar plantations, and the farther down the more orange trees appeared, some loaded with fruit. At the Fort itself were about a dozen trees from which the sergeant in charge was just gathering the fruit, which was partly loaded in a small sail vessel, and partly lying under the trees, in piles like apples in an orchard. Nothing can be more beautiful than an orange grove loaded with fruit, and when I remembered at this minute how bleak, cold and inhospitable is the north, and how green, bright and beautiful are the sugar fields and groves of Louisiana at this season of

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's second child was born in November.

<sup>2</sup> General David E. Twiggs, then commanding the department including New Orleans.



the year, I rather incline to prefer this with its long summer and mosquitoes to the former. Should we get Cuba that will be for the better, for there they have high lands, instead of this flat swamp upon which Louisiana is placed. The morning papers contain a long letter from Secretary Buchanan to our Spanish Minister more than four years ago, which will no doubt form the policy of Pierce's administration, to buy Cuba for a hundred millions of dollars. Should Cuba be so acquired during the next two years I shall feel tempted to relinquish my Pacific plans.<sup>1</sup>

"I am going to dine today at Colonel Bliss's,<sup>2</sup> with General Persifor Smith and others, and on Saturday am going up the river about a hundred miles to spend some days on a sugar plantation. I have seen sugar made often, but never on a Louisiana plantation. The river banks here are called the coast, probably a corruption of the french *côte*, (shore or side). So in passing up or down the river you say, up or down the coast. . . ."

"NEW ORLEANS, La., *December 14, 1852.*

"I have not heard from you since my last letter, but the mails have been so irregular that I do not attribute the delay to you. Since my last nothing has transpired worthy of record, excepting perhaps a visit I made a few days ago to Jackson's battle ground. It is about a mile below the barracks. They are about four miles down stream from here, or two miles from the omnibus

<sup>1</sup> Further service on the frontier was at this time a strong desire of Sherman's.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel W. W. S. Bliss, son-in-law of General Taylor.

stand. I went in the omnibus as far as it went, then walked to the barracks where I got a horse and in company with Lieut. Fry,<sup>1</sup> rode on horseback down to the battle ground. Strange to say there is nothing to mark the spot save a small granite block not more than thirty inches long, which has inscribed January 8, 1815, and that stone has fallen into the small ditch that runs by the road side. The old ditch remains, with large trees on its margin, and a common lane runs along the inside, used alone by the curious who visit the site of one of the most bloody and decisive battles of the war of 1812. An old negro with deformed hand, blind in one eye and the other a hideous one, is the guide and historian, lives in a clapboard hut, and stands ready to repeat his oft-told tale, how the cannon roared, and the rifle and musket, etc., when Pakenham fell and where "Massa Jackson" broke through the roof of a house (still standing) to look at the British with his spy glass. Plain as the field of Lundy's Lane which we visited at Niagara, this is still more devoid of military points or features, and the only wonder excited to a military mind is, that the old British soldiers had not been more prudent than to advance over such smooth war ground to attack the wall of cotton bales, guarded by skilful marksmen. However now it makes little difference and the ground yields its crop of sugar cane the same as though a fierce battle had never trampled upon an ungathered crop. . ."

<sup>1</sup> James Barnet Fry, later well known as Provost Marshal-General, U. S. A.

## V

### THE MAN OF BUSINESS

1853—1859

It was at about the end of 1852 that Sherman's family arrived in New Orleans to share with him the house he had taken in Magazine Street. Almost simultaneously a St. Louis friend brought him a tempting offer to go to San Francisco as a partner in a banking firm, Lucas, Turner & Co., about to be established there. In letters not printed in the preceding chapter there were indications that Sherman was growing restive under the routine of his commissary work. On August 2, 1852, he wrote: "I am getting tired of this dull, tame life and should a fair opportunity occur for another campaign on the frontier, I cannot promise to keep quiet. Commissaries are not fighting men, but I could effect an advantageous exchange." On November 21 he reverted to the idea of a frontier campaign, and on November 26, 1852, wrote, "Nothing but activity and continued interest contents me, and when these fail, an impulse moves me that reason, nor pleasure, nor any ordinary motive accounts for." These sentences reflect a state of mind which was a fertile soil in which to plant the suggestion of going to California for a campaign of unexpected novelty—a campaign of business.

Sherman had the prudence, however, not to resign immediately from the army, but to ask for a leave of absence in which to investigate the business prospects. The Magazine Street house, therefore, could hardly have become a home when in February, 1853, he sent his family back to Ohio, and concluded his arrangements for setting out to the Pacific Coast.

The first letter from California, April 12, 1853, describes the shipwreck, near San Francisco, of the vessel which bore Sherman to his new venture. But the circumstances are related in such detail in the *Memoirs* that the letter would be superfluous here. For about three months Sherman remained in San Francisco, looking over the ground. His first impressions were not favorable, and near the end of a discouraged letter of May 11 he wrote: "I fear I will never enjoy a full and fair field for my natural activity of mind and body, until both are crippled." Finally satisfied, however, with what he foresaw, he returned East, consulted with business associates and family, and wrote his resignation from the army, taking effect September 6, 1853. Two weeks later he sailed for San Francisco with Mrs. Sherman and one of his two children. Except for a visit to the East which Mrs. Sherman made from the spring to the autumn of 1855, they were together for most of the next four years—with a consequent dearth of letters. But here, and elsewhere in later days, some of the gaps are filled by letters to Mrs. Sherman's father, the Hon. Thomas Ewing.

The time of the California experiment was unpropitious for business success. In the winter of 1855 a panic

in San Francisco brought all financial undertakings there into peril, and in May of 1857 Sherman and his family left the closed bank behind them. In spite of the impending general panic of this year, the bank had not failed, but merely discontinued its business. A continuance of the same business in New York where the panic soon embarrassed all banking enterprises, proved no more fortunate for him, and in 1859 he found himself, sorely buffeted and perplexed, a lawyer in Leavenworth, Kansas.

The letters will expand this brief outline of a trying period.

“SAN FRANCISCO, Cal.,

“*June 30, 1853.*

“. . . This is a great country for rich people, but death to a poor one. Turner has shifted his quarters to another house, but we all get our meals together at a restaurant. This is the usual way and it suits very well indeed—breakfast of tea, beefsteak, muffins, and radishes, dinner according to call, fine soup, fish, roasts, stews and all sorts of French notions,—indeed I would not ask a better table. Very few make more than two meals, but as my room is over the restaurant I frequently take a cup of tea. Our evenings are spent in various ways, visiting, walking the streets to see mountebanks, auctioneers, and gambling rooms. These things which usually in all cities are hid in the dark alleys, here occupy the most conspicuous places. The gambling rooms are elegantly lighted with mirrors and pictures of the most costly kind. A bar room with servants supplies gratis the crowd with drinks and the

tables at which gambling is conducted are attended by pretty French girls who rake in the piles of money lost or pay the winners their stakes. There are four of these within hearing of the plaza with the finest music I almost ever heard. Lola Montez has been drawing crowds at five dollars a ticket. She gave three benefits, one to the Asylums, Catholic and Protestant, clearing near \$5,000. Such are the characters that suit the California atmosphere. Yet times are changing. Ladies are thronging here by each steamer, churches are springing up in every quarter. Lectures on temperance are nightly listened to by crowded audiences. The city council has already prohibited street gambling and the tendency of things is to root out the gamblers. Their race is run, and their days are numbered. Auctions form an interesting lounge. One street is lined literally with Jews, who standing on a box cry out to the crowds their wares at awfully low prices. Some of them are funny and witty, attracting listeners, if not buyers. Raffling is another subject of excitement. All the time there are three or four on hand—one now for \$65,000 with 2,400 prizes. One prize is a piece of gold worth \$5,000. A great many watches, jewels of great value, shawls, Chinese Gods, etc., make up the bulk of prizes. So common is the spirit of gambling that crowds are at the place of raffle each night to raffle for tickets, that is ten persons each pay \$1 and then cast dice who shall have the whole ten tickets. This raffle is to come off July 5, and I have always intended to take some chances, but can't afford to lose and therefore think I shall resist temptation. I



have already purchased some things to be brought home as presents for you if I return or send you in case I do not. The Fourth of July is to be celebrated here with all pomp. Old Captain S—— is to be the hero, if they can keep him sober enough. A committee is appointed for that purpose, but from my appreciation of the members another committee must be appointed to look after them. I have been pretty free of asthma for a long time, though this climate is peculiarly suited to produce it. Our mornings are warm, bright and pleasant, but about noon comes from the sea a regular blow accompanied by dust, sand and mist. By night it is cold enough for an overcoat or cloak. I had a pretty severe attack shortly after my arrival, but Dr. Hitchcock says it was not owing to lungs but a kind of fever, and, strange to say, prescribed quinine. It relieved me promptly, and upon a recurrence of any symptoms I have taken quinine. It has more relieved my breast than any medicine I ever before attempted, and it may be that it will continue to have that effect. I doubt much, however, if it will ever leave me except for a time. If you hear by telegraph of my arrival in New Orleans write promptly to Saint Louis and hold yourself in readiness to leave home for New Orleans by September 1. I will not be able to stay more than a few hours in Lancaster as I must be in New Orleans September 7. . . .”

“SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., *May 8, 1855.*

“We have had a week of unusual hard and unpleasant work. The mail steamer *Sonora* came in,

just after the *Golden Age*<sup>1</sup> had gone on the 1st inst. with an account of the failure of Page and Bacon,<sup>2</sup> involving as a matter of course the failure here, with a new run, another panic, worse if possible than the last. Some malicious scoundrel started also the story that the house of Lucas and Simonds<sup>3</sup> too had failed, and you know how all here are blind in a case of the kind and no assurances from us were of any avail, so instead of a single day of panic we have had a whole week. But the Nicaragua steamer came in last night and brought no news, which is good news that Lucas and Simonds had not failed, so the thing has subsided back again to the same old condition of things. Instead of making a month's journey into the mountains I only went to Sacramento, where, as usual, I could not sleep and had to come back. I shall, however, make another effort after the next mail steamer arrives and departs. By her I shall hear of your safe arrival at Panama. According to my account you will reach New York today or tomorrow. . . ."

"SAN FRANCISCO, May 16, 1855.

"The *John L. Stevens* is coming in, the express boats have arrived and you must imagine my horror to hear that the *Golden Age*<sup>4</sup> was wrecked. Hardly a minute

<sup>1</sup> The *Golden Age*, with Mrs. Sherman on board, sailed April 17. *Memoirs*, I, 145.

<sup>2</sup> A New York and St. Louis banking house, with a San Francisco branch, Page, Bacon & Co.

<sup>3</sup> The St. Louis house, of which Sherman's firm, Lucas, Turner & Co., was the San Francisco branch.

<sup>4</sup> The wreck of this vessel, April 29, is described in the *Memoirs*, I, 145.

elapsed till the full particulars were given saying that all the passengers were safe, and were hardly delayed in the journey. Mr. William Duncan came in this moment with your letter written on the 28th of April, the very day when the ship is said to have been wrecked. I know full well the horror you have of shipwreck and am very anxious to hear from you. There are several letters in town from Mr. Aspinwall and others which will be published in the papers. According to the accounts that have reached me thus far, you must have had a great fright and some inconvenience. This will serve to increase your dread of the sea, but having once been wrecked and seen no loss of life or property, it may be that you will appreciate how seldom a steamer causes the loss of life at sea when properly commanded.

"I observe you formed one of the Captain's party, and can infer that all were polite and attentive. Of this I feel assured from the character of Mr. Aspinwall and the other gentlemen passengers. I feel very anxious to hear more. I left the children at 9 o'clock in a perfect glee watering the flowers. Biddy's management is perfect. She is like an old hen with two chickens. . . ."

"SAN FRANCISCO, May 31, 1855.

"Just on the eve of departure of the last mail we heard of the wreck of the *Golden Age*, but I did not get [the news] until too late to answer all your letters. But they all came safely, some by hand and some by mail, the one by Acapulco, that written just before the wreck, the long one from the wreck, and last from the *John L. Stevens*. I instantly complied with your request to

call on Mrs. Watkins,<sup>1</sup> who had already learned the details in a short note from her husband, and Mr. Aspinwall; but she was much gratified to hear from you that Commodore Watkins was not blamed by the passengers. It was a narrow risk, very much so indeed, but all the following circumstances at this time look so favorable that you cannot get much sympathy for the dangers and troubles of shipwreck. That Watkins' prompt determination to beach the vessel saved you all is too evident, for those rocks are in deep water, and had the ship filled in deep water, the boats alone could have saved you, and it is doubtful if that crowd of men would have had the courage and gallantry to give the ladies first chance. But all turned out well, as well as a wreck could, and you can now tell your tale of a traveller of shipwreck and disaster. Such is the love of danger and the marvellous in the human composition that you will have to tell again and again of your wreck on Quicaron Island. . . ."

"SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., *May* 31, 1855.

"It is now past midnight. I have got through my heaviest letters and propose now to write you *via* Nicaragua lest any delay occur to the mail in which you will receive several letters from Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Bowman, Bidley and myself. I sent also by mail a daguerrotype of the children, and by express I will send another. This latter is the best, though neither is as good as we wanted. We took six or eight and selected these two. Willy would not keep quiet. He

<sup>1</sup> Wife of the captain of the *Golden Age*.

struggled and though Biddy managed to hold his hands, he kept his eyes moving so that they are not given at all. His eyes, too, are light and the daguerrotype does not do them justice. You will observe that Lizzie held Biddy to hold him quiet. She seemed to comprehend the necessity of being quiet, and was as steady as a die, and aided to keep Willy's arm still. Of course we had a good deal of fun with them, and I think you will be satisfied at least that they are in good condition. They are both very fat. Willy is as heavy a load as I want to carry, and he tyrannises over me completely, making me carry him all round the yard an hour after each meal. He cries for me, and I have to steal away as I used to from Lizzie. Lizzie, on the contrary, considers herself a reasonable being and can easily be satisfied with a promise that I am coming back. She still says you have gone on the party to get Minnie, and to bring her candy, spoons, dishes, etc. She has a set of pewter that are served up on all occasions, but Willy plays sad havoc with her arrangements. She is perfectly in awe of him, and runs in perfect dread when he approaches. He can rise by a chair and walk sideways holding on. I think next steamer I can report that he walks. He begins to talk a lingo of his own, perfectly incomprehensible, but that he understands much that is said to him there is no doubt.

"In business, times are mending slowly. Lucas and Simonds have at my request made modifications in our contract that is to my benefit some three or four thousand a year. Indeed they do anything I ask and I would be foolish to find fault with any of them. I only fear they may form too high an estimate of me, and in-

crease my responsibility, in proportion. Nisbet is a partner of their own selection, yet they look to me individually to manage all things important. I ought to relieve my mind from so much, and yet I don't see how it can be done. In order to accomplish success there must be but one head, and that head must know everything even to the minutest details. From what Turner writes, if I could be replaced here, they would like to have me in Saint Louis, but I don't think of it. It is better for all hands that I should stay here my six years.

"I was rather amused last Sunday a week at being invited to accept the nomination of the Democratic party for City Treasurer. When waited on I explained that although no politician I was not entitled to the name of Democrat. They insisted that made no difference, they only asking a pledge against 'know-nothingism.' This I could have given, but as an acceptance of a Democratic nomination might have been misconstrued I thought it best to decline, though the salary of four thousand would have been acceptable and the office would have chimed in well with my present business. The Democrats at the election carried their ticket, so had I accepted the nomination I should have been elected. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

"SAN FRANCISCO, Cal.

"*April* 15, 1856.

". . . Of course we feel deeply interested here in everything that looks like war with a nation of such formidable naval strength as England, and we read with care all



the papers of our own and that country touching the subject. We cannot believe that any clique of politicians would involve us in such a war, for such contemptible subjects as that of the logwood colony of Belise or the enlistment of a few men, who were, doubtless, a good riddance to our country.<sup>1</sup> Still, wars have sometimes arisen from slighter pretexts and I hope the General Government will from this simple cause continue to fortify those cities of commercial importance that lie exposed to sudden attack. War would be fatal to California—not that any European nation could capture or occupy it, but England could blockade the coast and reduce us to exchange our gold for their goods at their own prices. The entrance to this harbor is one of the strongest and most capable of defence in the world. Forts are projected and in the course of construction, which will make it utterly impossible for any fleet to enter, and should war arise before the completion of these works temporary batteries could be constructed in a few days, capable of sealing the entrance to any fleet. So the worst I apprehend from war to us is blockade. The great railroad is at present an impossibility, but a wagon road is easy and would be of immense use to us, and if the worst comes to the worst we could, under escorts, send our treasure that way. But the distance is too great to haul goods, though the Russians do send trains of travellers and goods from

<sup>1</sup> At this time the relations of the United States with Great Britain under the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty were under a somewhat critical tension, the greater because of questions of enlistment and of filibustering expeditions to Central America. See I. D. Travis's *History of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty*, p. 175.

Moscow to the Sea of Okotsch on the Pacific, a distance of double that from the frontier of Missouri to California. I have taken an active interest in this wagon road, and we shall send forward with this mail a petition with enough signatures to show the preference of our people. . . .

“Since I embarked in this scheme, affairs have much changed. Almost every bank has failed. A large proportion of the wealthy have become embarrassed and bankrupt. Real estate has fallen from an exaggerated rate to almost nothing. As all this time we have had much money loaned it has been a period of deep anxiety to me, and I have thought more of acquitting my duties to my associates to [than of] making anything for myself. Were the arrangement to be made over again I would act more advisedly, but as Mr. Lucas and Major Turner have done everything I could expect, I am determined if I live to stick out my full term of six years, and then will be prepared to act for the future. . . . I am better known here than anywhere else. I have been so long identified with California that it would be foolish to change, so I look upon this as my home, and whether I ever change is a question I leave to be solved by the future. . . .

“At times I do think I would like to free myself from the anxiety attending credit transactions in so desperate a country, but I am in for it, and must take the chances. . . .”

A month later Sherman wrote to his father-in-law about the stirring episodes between the Vigilantes and

the "Law-and-Order party" following the murder of one San Francisco journalist, James King, by another, James Casey. Sherman had just been made a major-general of militia, and was naturally arrayed on the Law-and-Order side. The letter of May 21, however, has been printed in the *Century Magazine* for December, 1891, and is so much less comprehensive than Sherman's account of the affair in his *Memoirs* that it seems best to pass at once to the next letter bearing more closely upon his personal fortunes.

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

"SAN FRANCISCO, Cal.

"January 3, 1857.

"Mrs. Ewing mentions in one of her letters that you were disappointed in not hearing from me. The fact is I have a good deal to do, and besides I did not think you cared about hearing from me unless I had something specific to write about. To be sure, in this strange land there is no scarcity of topics, yet this, unless connected together in somewhat of a history, cannot much interest you, for our tales are of trouble and anxiety and disorder. In your last to me you spoke of the probability of my being promoted to New York. This plan was based on the supposition that a Capt. C. P. Stone<sup>1</sup> in business here could succeed me, but that has become impossible. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Charles Pomeroy Stone, afterward distinguished for military service in the Civil War and in Egypt, had recently resigned from the army.

"We have had awful times in California during my administration here. When we began we were on the top of a high wave rolling towards a dangerous but hidden reef. Page, Bacon & Co. had the reputation of having amassed a vast fortune, and Adams & Co.<sup>1</sup> were supposed to be made of pure gold. Lands and houses here were yielding fabulous rents, and gold was a drug. People paid their three and five per cent a month without a blush. Houses were building in every direction and the cities were pushing their streets over hills and out upon the bay, where but a year before ships were riding at anchor. Indeed even yet many of our houses are old ships imbedded in mud, on whose bulwarks are erected the framework of a house. We all supposed these magical changes were the result of gold from our mountains. This was but partially the case, for our gold was going East about as fast as it came down from the mountains, but foreign monies were coming here for investment at the high rates of interest then prevailing. The first bursting of the bubble was caused by the flight of Meiggs<sup>2</sup> who was the great financier of the city, who led his associates on to build streets and wharves until he made the city bankrupt. Then came the failure of banks, showing that the profits, however enormous, had been more than consumed by expenses; and now at the last moment our

<sup>1</sup> A San Francisco banking house, with "numerous offices scattered throughout the mining country." *Memoirs*, I, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Meiggs, who, owing about \$1,000,000 in San Francisco, fled with his family to Peru, where he made a vast fortune in railway construction and subsequently paid many of his American debts.

Supreme Court has decided that all the banks of the State and all public securities have been issued in violation of the Constitution of the State and are therefore void. I have always mistrusted California politicians, and therefore never touched bonds as securities. These decisions of the Supreme Court in fact repudiate over four millions of public debt. The Courts here have absolved bankrupts from about nine million of debts, and property has in the same time depreciated full fifty per cent. You can readily understand how anxious I have had reason to be in this long period of downward progress. I believe our losses have been less than any banking house here, but it would be wrong for me to expect in a crisis of this kind, in a business where credit is everything, to accumulate and save money. . . .”

Leaving California in May of 1857 Sherman was ready to make a fresh start when the New York office of Lucas, Turner & Co. opened its doors on July 21, 1857. A more unfavorable time for the new enterprise could hardly have been hit upon, for one month later the failure of the Ohio Life and Trust Company precipitated the panic of 1857, and close upon its heels came the loss of a steamer bearing sixteen hundred thousand dollars of treasure from California. One result of these calamities was that in October, less than three months from the beginning of the business of Lucas, Turner & Co. in New York, it came to an end, though with no loss of honor to the firm. During this time Mrs. Sherman was in Lancaster, Ohio.

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"BANKING HOUSE OF LUCAS, TURNER & Co.,  
"No. 12 Wall Street, New York.

*"July 29, 1857.*

". . . I know no position in life so unenviable as one of fame not deserved, of position not merited, and like most persons I think I occupy that most unenviable post. As we begin to draw to a settlement I feel what has been a nightmare to me for years, that the causes which have led to the bankruptcy of all we lived amongst has been telling on the business subject to my control. Of course we did not break. We held high reputation among men, but who can tell the secret sorrows of the most pleased looking man who walks the highway? Of all lives on earth a banker's is the worst, and no wonder they are specially debarred all chances of heaven. Bound at any and every moment to produce the very dollar deposited, compelled to keep up an expensive outshow, and yet compelled to lend the money on chance, and depending on that chance for profit! I can only, therefore, now say that, as I long feared, as we draw our California affairs to a close I fear our profits, if any, will be small, and first of all I will be in debt to the house for whatever I used over and above the stated income, \$6,000 a year. What this will be I cannot now foretell, but I feel certain it will be something. Several officers sent money to me to invest and I did so. I fear the utter depression in California is such that I cannot get that money in at once, and they are asking me for it, and appearances must in my position be



maintained, so that I must sell my St. Louis property—all—and trust myself to the San Francisco securities. Our fate has been cast in a wrong time and I regret I ever left the Army, though at every turn flattery and magnificent future prospects are held out to me. If I could feel satisfied that I could extricate myself from this dilemma I would feel great relief. . . .”

“NEW YORK, *August 24, 1857.*

“. . . I seem to fall on bad times in business, for I am not fairly installed before failures have begun. Today the great Ohio Life and Trust Company failed. We had one of their checks which I went down to recover—the drafts for which the check was given, and it reminded me of San Francisco. I am convinced they are going to see sights here. I am satisfied many of the stocks on which mercantile and banking wealth are founded are as valueless at bottom as those mining stocks of San Francisco, which blew up the great men there.

“It won’t do to croak in business, but I don’t like the aspect of business generally. This view of things makes me too cautious—safety rather than profit. I can lose my own money and property without feeling much, but to lose what is confided to me by others I can’t stand. . . .

“I think this failure of the Ohio Life and Trust Company is likely to give us a large part of the business they formerly did, but my notion is that it is all work and responsibility and little pay. Everybody wants to be a banker. To be a banker implies plenty of money,

and pretension is as good as the real thing. Now Mr. Lucas is so situated that he cannot break. Failure would entail on him heavy loss, whereas nine bankers out of ten can fail and be better off than when they began. But these pretended bankers get quite a name, and the world at large don't know the difference, and as they promise so very much, the business is worth little or nothing to those who expect to fulfill their obligations. I am satisfied it don't suit me, and I wish I were out of it at some honest employment, but I am in it and must persevere. . . ."

"NEW YORK, September 18, 1857.

"You will have heard that the *Central America*, our *George Law*,<sup>1</sup> is lost, swallowed up in the terrible storm of the 11th. But meagre reports are yet come that some sixty out of five hundred people belonging to her are on a sailing vessel, the rest all gone.

"We who have been on her can fancy the terrible scene, as wave after wave swept over her, filling her, and sinking her, leaving five hundred people struggling and clinging to fragments to be picked up at chance, or to sink forever. Capt. Herndon was in command and of course is lost. His wife and daughter are here, and on a visit I made last evening on Mrs. Myers at the New York hotel, I heard they were deeply anxious, then knowing nothing. . . . Well, we are all safe ashore, and I guess you will not again be called on to tempt the dangers of

<sup>1</sup> Apparently Sherman and his wife had sailed on this ship between New York and Nicaragua. The story of her loss is given fully in the *Memoirs*, I, 163-4.

the sea. I may have to, but guess I am not doomed to be drowned, else I would have been long ago.

"About your coming east,—do not commit yourself for some weeks yet. Mr. Lucas is evidently not relishing these successive dangers which threaten his property, and I would not blame him if he would conclude as soon as this storm blows over, to draw out of this dangerous business. If I were a rich man—of which there is not the remotest chance—I would as soon try the faro table as risk the chances of banking. We may talk of prudence and all that, but we might as well talk of avoiding risk in this business as to avoid and escape danger at sea. The loss of this *Central America* at this juncture adds to the general distress. Here is a dead loss of two millions of dollars to some people, but where the loss will ultimately fall will not be ascertained for a long time to come. In the meantime, the banks of this city have got to sustain it for a time. Insurance companies ought to pay, but to pay they will have to borrow and that is going to be a difficult thing in these times.

"Don't make up your mind to come east till I have time to think a little farther ahead. Affairs were complicated enough before, but this sad accident may be the last ounce that broke the camel's back.

"The banks here are illy able to bear these losses and if they begin to break, there is no telling where it will stop."

The trouble stopped short of any losses to the creditors of Lucas, Turner & Co., but the forced suspension of James H. Lucas & Co. of St. Louis obliged the New

York house to bring its business to an end on October 7, 1857. On the very day before this misfortune Sherman wrote to his wife: "I am going to quit clean-handed—not a cent in my pocket. I know this is not modern banking, but better be honest." He started at once for St. Louis, remained there for nearly two months, helping to settle the affairs of the firm, and then went to California to realize all that was possible on their San Francisco assets, which were considerable. A long letter of March 3, 1858, described the difficulties and discouragements of this process. A single passage from it will sufficiently reveal Sherman's state of mind.

"SAN FRANCISCO, Cal.

"*March 3, 1858.*

". . . It is too bad to oppress your mind with such sad pictures, but you can easily imagine me here, far away from you, far away from the children, with hope almost gone of ever again being able to regain what little self-respect or composure I ever possessed. I wish I could, like most men, harden my conscience, and say I could not [could no more] help the downfall of this country or avoid the consequences thereof, than to have dodged a cannon ball, or escape an earthquake. You know I worked as hard as anybody could, that my whole thoughts, too much so, were engrossed in this business, which kept getting worse and worse from the time Page and Bacon broke, till we got away. What I did, and what dangers I avoided are of the past and must be forgotten. What I failed to do, and the bad debts that now stare me in the face, must stand forever

as a monument of my want of sense and sagacity. Again I say I envy N——'s nonchalance and the nonchalance of business men generally, who wipe out these old sums, like the marks on a slate and begin anew with no feeling or regrets for the past. . . ."

The remaining letters of this chapter were written in the period during which Sherman, admitted to the bar "on the ground of general intelligence,"<sup>1</sup> was practising law with his two brothers-in-law, Hugh and Thomas Ewing, Jr., in Leavenworth, Kansas. Of his own fitness for the law he said in one of the Kansas letters not printed hereafter: "If I turn lawyer, it will be bungle, bungle, from Monday to Sunday, but if it must be, so be it."

"LEAVENWORTH CITY, *September 18, 1858.*

*"Sunday.*

". . . I have been round about here a good deal, and tomorrow start on a little business for which I will be paid by Van Vliet<sup>2</sup> to Fort Riley, some 140 miles west of this, a trip I am glad to make for the reason that it enables me to see the country, and also to look at that tract of land on which your father counts so much.<sup>3</sup> Also I will meet and see parties coming and going to the gold mines of Pike's Peak. If there be real gold placers of any extent, it will afford what Leavenworth

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Major Stewart Van Vliet, quartermaster at Fort Leavenworth, a West Point classmate of Sherman's.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Ewing owned land on Indian Creek, forty miles west of Fort Leavenworth.

needs, a market on which she can rely, to support her present population. If the gold mine story is a mere Roorback, then it is going to be tight scratching here, as it will be just like California—big towns, with plenty of inhabitants but nothing to support them. Leavenworth is out of all proportion to the back country, and in my judgment will collapse, unless it has already collapsed, provided they cannot keep up some land or political excitement to attract people here, to spend what money they bring along. I have seen Van Vliet very often, and he is the first to feel my true position.

“He asked me how I stood, and I told him at once the whole fact that I was adrift seeking employment, and he forthwith told me there was a small appropriation to be expended on the road between this and Fort Riley; that if I would go, he would provide me a good ambulance and four mules, driver, full outfit, and pay me for my time. Also, he has an order to sell a large amount of horses, mules, wagons, harness, etc., at auction and that I might have that job. I accepted both and they will employ me well for a month to come, and will take up the very time that I am compelled to spend here, waiting for others. . . .

“I’ll tell you now my St. Louis ideas. Everybody there of my old acquaintance laughed at the idea of my living at Leavenworth. . . . I have such unbounded confidence in St. Louis generally, that I would go to work with something like a conviction of success. Let adversity fall upon any quarter of the world, St. Louis is independent of all—numerical [?] enough to occupy millions of men, armies of trade, north, south, east,



west, water and railway. Individuals may prosper in a failing community such as San Francisco, but they must be Jews, without pity, soul, heart or bowels of compassion; but in a rising, growing, industrious, community like St. Louis, all patient, prudent, honest men can thrive. This is why my thoughts revert to St. Louis, with its schools, libraries, places of diversion, amusement etc.—all that we seek for, for ourselves and children. . . .”

“FORT RILEY, *Saturday*,

“*September 25, 1858.*

“I write from this point, because there is a mail which in due course should reach Leavenworth before I do, though I start on my return in advance. I got here the evening before last and am perfectly at home with sound of bugle and drum, with officers and soldiers, whom I know not of former acquaintance save of one, but because I know their feelings and prejudices. I doubt if ever I can gain the same knowledge of the secret recesses of citizens at large.

“Here on the extreme frontier, I feel as much at ease, and far more so than I could in Lancaster, but I must not tarry too long here, but start back in a few hours; but in the prosecution of the business on which I came. This is a handsome post—six large officers’ quarters and six soldiers barracks, forming four sides of a rectangle, enclosing a handsome parade ground. There are now one company of artillery and two of dragoons here. The soldiers seem well, but the horses have just returned from a long march of 1,500 miles, and look thin.

On my way up also I met four companies under Colonel Sumner<sup>1</sup> encamped, and I spent four hours in their camp talking of old times. It makes me regret my being out of service thus to meet my old comrades, in the open field, just where I most like to be. But I must banish soldiering from my mind, and look to the bridges and gullies and round holes of the road. On my way back I will look again at your father's and Tom's land, but as to selling anything in Kansas now [it] seems out of the question. It is California all over. Everybody has more land than they know what to do with, and no money. The military posts and disbursements for army purposes gave the people a market for hay, corn, cattle, and horses, but now that the Utah and Indian wars are over, it is going to be hard work for farmers to dispose of their surplus cattle and stuff. I found the road up very good, save at the crossing of some streams which were bridged, but whose bridges were swept off by the freshets of last spring. Now it threatens rain and on my return I will have an opportunity to see the effect. Part of the road down in the Kansas valley in wet and frosty weather must be bad, but that on the high upland prairie must be tolerably good at all seasons. This is one vast prairie, not level but rolling, with valleys leading from the divides to the water courses. Along the water there is always timber and also along the small ravines, where in rainy weather the springs flow. But the great bulk of the country is devoid of trees and bushes, but covered with a high

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Vose Sumner then commanding the Department of the West.

rank grass, heavier this season than ever before, as evidenced by Colonel Sumner, who has been on the prairies all his life. I have a close covered spring wagon, called an ambulance, with four mules. One of these died since my arrival here, and the driver is having another shod to take his place. There are houses all the way to Fort Leavenworth, and therefore I will not have to sleep out. Some of these houses are mere shells, indeed the best houses and farms along the road are those of the Pottawottamie Indians. I should judge that thus far Kansas has been settled by lawyers and politicians instead of farmers and mechanics. . . .”

“INDIAN CREEK,<sup>1</sup> [Kansas] *April 9, 1859.*

“I got today a package of letters from Tom, among them two from your father, and yours from Cincinnati. I was much gratified to hear you had so rapid and pleasant a trip.<sup>2</sup> I felt certain that the officers of the *Emma* would do all in their power, and I think now I ought to be a pretty good judge of men and boats. I take it for granted that on Monday you got home and by this time feel as though California and Kansas were dream lands. They may be for you, but for others they are stern realities. . . .

“I don’t like the attitude of things about Pike’s Peak. No gold yet comes, yet a stream of men pours thitherward, and should it prove a mere fabrication, the reaction may injure rather than help Kansas. I

<sup>1</sup> Sherman at this time was opening Mr. Ewing’s farm, to which reference has already been made.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Sherman with the children had just returned to Ohio after a visit to Kansas lasting from November till April.

am satisfied those mines cannot be as rich as those of California, for were they, much gold would have come in. Even if they are half as good, it will be enough to retain a large population in Kansas which will make your property in Leavenworth valuable, as well as give a good chance to operate here. It is this reason which makes me try and prepare this farm to be ready for this chance. Should Pike's Peak be a mere bubble, then we must sell the corn at the best price possible, and hereafter let the farm develope like any other. . . .

"We are here near the Pottawottamie Indians. Three, all painted up, came to our cabin one day, and Luke thought himself in danger, and was shocked, when I got home, that I made them quit quick. They were beggars and I won't let them come about the house at all. . . ."

"INDIAN CREEK, *April 15, 1859.*

". . . Thus far April has been the coldest month of the year. Snow Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and tonight though the wind has in a measure subsided, yet it is so cold I can hardly hold my pen. San Francisco can't hold a candle to the prairies of Kansas for wind. Indeed they are a serious drawback to the country, and are severer on stock and people than real cold and ice. As yet there is no grass and no signs of leafing. This lateness may be of service to me in our corn speculation, as Pike's Peakers are strung along the road for hundreds of miles, laid up, froze up, and their animals must be fed to live. They counted on grass before this and there is no sign of it, and I doubt whether grass will be

available till June, by which time I hope corn will have reached the highest price. I only fear that Pike's Peak itself may explode as a great humbug before we realize our figures. . . .

"I have with you my doubts about Kansas. It has not the elements of permanent prosperity—a hard climate, neither one thing or other, poor timber, stone, no fuel, and no prospect of manufactures. . . . I am doomed to be a vagabond, and shall no longer struggle against my fate. . . . I look on myself as a dead cock in the pit, not worthy of further notice, and will take the chances as they come. . . ."

## VI

### DIRECTING A SOUTHERN MILITARY SCHOOL

1859—1861

THE note of disappointment and defeat which has frequently recurred throughout the preceding chapters sounds with a poignant sadness at the end of the chapter just concluded. There was indeed reason enough for Sherman to feel conquered by hostile circumstances. Drawing close to forty, when, as he well knew, a man of his abilities should have found himself established in some definite and honorable place, he must in truth have seemed to many of his contemporaries hardly more successful than he appeared to his own relentless vision. Yet he had never flinched. If the San Francisco bank had not been directed by a man of foresight and courage, there is every reason to suppose that it would have failed, like its sister institutions, disastrously. Those who had the fullest knowledge of Sherman's course and its consequences must have seen that the depression and discouragement were due rather to the temperament of one who demands the highest things of himself than to any essential failure. Through all this ill-starred time, occasions came to him everywhere for playing the part of the man, and everywhere he played



it manfully. Everywhere, too, the autobiographic record speaks, though always indirectly, for the rare accumulations both of intelligence and of the fruits of character which he brought to his last considerable employment before the outbreak of the Civil War.

This was the superintendency of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, which opened its doors to pupils on January 1, 1860. The offer of this place, which came to him through the influence of friends who did not share his own view of himself, fell at a time when Sherman was at his wits' end about the next step he should take, and it was correspondingly welcome. It must have been partly "on the ground of general intelligence" again that Sherman was selected for the work. Certainly he had had no special training for the conduct of an institution of learning. But the school was more than that. Its founders had before their eyes the model of such an academy as the Virginia Military Institute, which in turn looked to West Point for many of its ideals; and Sherman's military education and experience were, of course, an important element in his equipment for the new task. Had either he or the Louisiana authorities known that secession and war were impending it is obvious that a soldier so devoted to the Union would never have gone into the South with the mission which took him there. What he experienced in handling a difficult administrative problem, what he gained in the clarifying of his own outlook upon national issues, in a word, what he learned in his brief period of teaching—all this is set forth in the letters about and from the

Seminary of Learning and Military Academy at Alexandria, Louisiana.

On the way down the Mississippi to his new enterprise he wrote as follows to Mrs. Sherman, who remained with their children in Lancaster, Ohio:

“STEAMER *L. M. Kennett*,

“*Saturday, October 29, 1859.*

“. . . I find Southern men, even men as well informed as — are as big fools as the abolitionists. Though Brown's whole expedition proves clearly that the Northern people oppose Slavery in the abstract, and yet very few will go so far as to act, yet the extreme Southrons pretend to think that the northern people have nothing to do but steal niggers and preach sedition.

“John's<sup>1</sup> position and Tom's<sup>2</sup> may force me at times to appear opposed to extreme southern views, or they may attempt to extract from me promises I will not give; and it may be, this position as the head of a Military College south, may be inconsistent with decent independence. I don't much apprehend such a state of case, still feeling runs so high when a nigger is concerned that, like religious questions, common sense is disregarded, and a knowledge of the character of mankind in such cases induces me to point out a combination that may yet operate on our fate.

“I have heard men of good sense say that the union

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. John Sherman was especially conspicuous at this time as the Republican candidate for Speaker of the House of Representatives.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Sherman's brother, with whom Sherman had just been practising law in Leavenworth, Kansas.

of States any longer was impossible, and that the South was preparing for a change. If such a thing be contemplated and overt acts be attempted, of course, I will not go with the South because with slavery, and the whole civilized world opposed to it, they in case of leaving the Union will have worse wars and tumults than now distinguish Mexico. If I have to fight hereafter I would prefer an open country and white enemies.

"I merely allude to these things now because I have heard a good deal lately about such things, and generally that the southern states, by military colleges and organizations, were looking to a dissolution of the Union. If they design to protect themselves against negroes, or abolitionists, I will help; if they propose to leave the Union on account of a supposed fact that the northern people are all abolitionists like Giddings and Brown, then I will stand by Ohio and the North West. . . ."

"BATON ROUGE,

"November 6, 1859,

"Sunday.

"I wrote you from the *Kennett* at Cairo—but not from Memphis. I got here last night about dark, the very day I had appointed, but so late in the day that when I called at the Governor's residence I found he had gone to a wedding. I have not yet seen him, and as tomorrow is the great election day of this state I hear that he is going down to New Orleans to-day. So I got up early, and as soon as I finish this letter I will go again.

"I have been to the Post Office and learn that several letters have come for me, all of which were sent to the

Governor. Capt. Ricketts<sup>1</sup> of the Army, commanding officer at the Barracks, found me last night, and has told me all the news, says that they were much pleased at my accepting the place, and that all place great reliance on me, that the place at Alexandria selected for the school is famous for salubrity, never has been visited by yellow fever and therefore is better adapted for the purpose than this place. He thinks that I will have one of the best places in the country, and that I will be treated with great consideration by the Legislature and authorities of the state. I will have plenty to do between this and the time for opening the school. I have yet seen nobody connected with the school and suppose all are waiting for me at Alexandria, where I will go to-morrow. . . .”

“ALEXANDRIA, La.,

“*Sunday, November 12, 1859.*

“I wrote you a hasty letter yesterday whilst the stage was waiting. Gen. Graham<sup>2</sup> and others have been with me every moment so that I was unable to steal a moment's time to write you. I left the wharf boat at the mouth of Red River, a dirty poor concern where I laid over one day, the stage only coming up tri-weekly; and at 9 o'clock at night started with an over-crowded stage, nine in and two out with driver, four good horses, Troy coach, road dead level and very dusty, lying along the banks of bayous which cut up the country

<sup>1</sup> James Brewerton Ricketts, later a well-known officer in the Union army.

<sup>2</sup> General G. Mason Graham, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

like a net work. Along these bayous lay the plantations, rich in sugar and cotton, such as you remember along the Mississippi at Baton Rouge.

"We rode all night, a fine moonlight, and before breakfast, at a plantation, we were hailed by Judge Boyce<sup>1</sup> who rode with us the rest of the journey. His plantation is twenty-five miles further up, but he has lived here since 26 and knows everybody. He insisted on my stopping with him at the plantation of Mr. Moore,<sup>2</sup> who is just elected Governor of Louisiana for the coming four years, and who, in that capacity, will be president of the Board of Supervisors who control the Seminary of Learning, and whose friendship and confidence it is important I should secure. He sent us into town in his own carriage. Alexandria isn't much of a town and the tavern where I am, Mrs. Fellow's, a second-rate concern, as all southern taverns out of large cities are. Still I have a good room opening into this parlor.

"Gen. Graham came in from his plantation, nine miles west of this and has been with me some time. At this moment he is at church, the Episcopal. He will go out home tonight, and tomorrow I go likewise, when we are to have a formal meeting and arrange some rules and regulations, also begin the system of study. He is the person who has from the start carried on the business. He was at West Point but did not graduate, but he has an unlimited admiration of the system of discipline and study. He is about fifty-five

<sup>1</sup> Judge Henry Boyce, of U. S. District Court.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas O. Moore.

years, rather small, exceedingly particular and methodic and altogether different from his half brother, the General.<sup>1</sup>

"The building is a gorgeous palace, altogether too good for its purpose, stands on a high hill three miles north of this, and reached by crossing Red River by a steam ferry and then three miles of bad road. It has four hundred acres of poor soil, but fine pine and oak trees, a single large building. Like most bodies they have spent all their money in the naked building, trusting to the Legislature for further means to provide furniture, etc. All this is to be done, and they agree to put me in charge, at once, and enable me to provide before January 1 the tables, desks, chairs, washboards, etc., the best I can, in time for January 1, and as this is a mere village I must procure all things from New Orleans. I may have to go down early next month, but for the present I shall go to General Graham's tomorrow, be there some days, return here and then remove to the college, where I will establish myself and direct in person the construction of such things as may be had there.

"There is no family near enough for me to board and so I will get the cook who provides for the carpenters to give me my meals.

"It is the design to erect two buildings for professors, but I doubt whether the Legislature will give any more, \$135,000 having already been expended. The institution, styled by law the Seminary of Learning, has an

<sup>1</sup> Colonel R. B. Mason, on whose staff Sherman served in California.



annual endowment of \$8,100, but it is necessary for the Legislature to appropriate this annually, and as they do not meet till the 3rd Monday in January, I don't see how we can get any money beforehand. I think when the appropriation is made, however, my salary will be allowed from November 1. . . ."

"NEW ORLEANS, *Sunday, December 12, 1859.*

". . . I am stopping at the City Hotel which is crowded and have therefore come to this my old office, now Capt. Kilburn's, to do my writing. I wish I were here legitimately, but that is now past, and must do the best in the new sphere in which events have cast me. All things here look familiar, the streets, houses, levee, drays, etc., and many of the old servants are still about the office, who remember me well and fly around at my bidding as of [old]. . . .

"I have watched with interest the balloting for speaker, with John as the Republican Candidate. I regret he ever signed that Helper's book<sup>1</sup> of which I know nothing but from the extracts bandied about in the southern papers. Had it not been for that I think he might be elected, but as it is, I do not see how he can expect any southern votes, and without them it seems that his election is impossible. His extreme position on

<sup>1</sup> *The Impending Crisis of the South*, by Hinton Rowan Helper, published in 1857. It was widely used as a Republican campaign document in 1860. On December 24, 1859, John Sherman wrote to W. T. Sherman: "You asked me why I signed the recommendation of the Helper Book. It was a thoughtless, foolish, and unfortunate act. . . . I never read the book, knew nothing of it, and now cannot recall that I authorized the use of my name."—*Sherman Letters*, p. 78.

that question will prejudice me, not among the Supervisors, but in the Legislature, where the friends of the Seminary must look for help. Several of the papers have alluded to the impropriety of importing from the North their school teachers, and if in the progress of debate, John should take extreme ground, it will, of course, get out that I am his brother from Ohio, universally esteemed an abolition state, and they may attempt to catechise me, to which I shall not submit. I will go on, however, in organizing the Seminary and trust to the future, but hitherto I have had such bad luck, in California and New York, that I fear I shall be overtaken here by a similar catastrophe. Of course, there are many here, such as Bragg, Hebert, Graham and others, that know that I am not an abolitionist. Still, if the simple fact be that my nativity and relationship with Republicans should prejudice the institution, I would feel disposed to sacrifice myself to that fact, though the result would be very hard, for I know not what else to do. If the southern states should organize for the purpose of leaving the Union I could not go with them. If that event is brought about by the insane politicians, I will ally my fate with the North, for the reason that the slave question will ever be a source of discord, even in the South.

“As long as the Abolitionists and Republicans seem to threaten the safety of slave property, so long will this excitement last, and no one can foresee its result; but all here talk as though a dissolution of the Union were not only a possibility but probability of easy execution. If attempted, we will have civil war of the most horrible

kind, and this country will become worse than Mexico.

"What I apprehend is that because John has taken such strong ground on the question of slavery, that I will first be watched and suspected, then may be addressed officially to know my opinion, and lastly some fool in the Legislature will denounce me as an abolitionist spy, because there is one or more southern man applying for my place.

"I am therefore very glad you are not here, and if events take this turn, I will act as I think best. As long as the United States Government can be maintained in its present form I will stand by it. If it is to break up in discord, strife, and civil war, I must either return to California, Kansas or Ohio. My opinions on slavery are good enough for this country, but the fact of John being so marked a Republican may make my name so suspect that it may damage the prospects of the Seminary, or thought to do so, which would make me very uncomfortable. . . ."

"SEMINARY, ALEXANDRIA, La.,

"December 16, 1859.

". . . It so happened that General Graham came out the very day of my return, not knowing that I was here, and he brought with him Mr. Smith,<sup>1</sup> the Professor of Chemistry, who is one of the real Virginia F. F. V's, a very handsome young man of twenty-two, who will doubtless be good company. He is staying with General Graham but will move here in a few days.

<sup>1</sup> Francis W. Smith.

General Graham seemed delighted at the progress I had made, and for the first time seemed well satisfied that we would in fact be ready by January 1st.

"I have not yet been to Alexandria, as I landed on this side the river and came out at once, but I shall go in on Monday and see all the Supervisors who are again to meet. I know the sentiments of some about abolitionism and am prepared if they say a word about John. I am not an abolitionist, still I do not intend to let any of them reflect on John in my presence, as the newspapers are full of bitter and angry expressions against him. All I have met have been so courteous that I have no reason to fear such a thing, unless some one of those who came, applicants for the post I fill, with hundreds of letters, should endeavor to undermine me by assertions on the infernal question of slavery, which seems to blind men to all ideas of common sense. . . .

"These southern politicians have so long cried out wolf, that many believe the wolf has come, and therefore they might in some moment of anger commit an act resulting in civil war. As long as the Union is kept, I will stand by it, but if we are going to split up into sections I would prefer our children should be raised in Ohio, or some northern state, to the alternative of a slave state, where we never can have slave property. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *December 23, 1859.*

". . . I have the New Orleans papers of the 18th in which I see that the election of speaker was still the engrossing topic, John's vote being 112, 114 being necessary to a choice. Still I doubt his final success on account of

his signing for that Helper's book. Without that his election would be certain. I was at Alexandria yesterday and was cornered by a Dr. Smith, a member of the Board of Supervisors, and at present candidate of this parish for a seat in the State Senate, to which he will surely be elected. He referred pointedly to the deep, intense feeling which now pervades the South, and the importance that all educational establishments should be in the hand of its friends. I answered in general terms that I had nothing to do with those questions, that I was employed to do certain things which I should do, that I always was a strong advocate of our present form of government, and as long as it remained I should be true to it; that if disunion was meditated in any quarter I should oppose it, but that if disunion did actually occur, an event I would not contemplate, then every man must take his own course, and I would not say what I would do. I still believe, somehow or other, efforts will be made to draw me out on these points, and I shall be as circumspect as possible. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *Wednesday, December 28, 1859.*

". . . I had rather a lonely Christmas, nobody here but my poor drummer and myself. The three negro women rushed to my room at daylight and cried 'Christmas gift, Massa'; and the negro boy, Henry, that chops wood, and the old negro woman, Amy, that cooks in an outhouse for the carpenters, all claimed 'Christmas' of me, thinking I am 'Boss' and rich as Croesus himself. I disbursed about \$5 in halves, for each of them had done me some service uncompensated.

The old cook, Amy, always hid away for me the last piece of butter, and made my breakfast and dinner better than the carpenters,' always saying 'She knowed I wasn't used to such kind of living.' She don't know what I have passed through. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *January 12, 1860.*

". . . Everything moves along satisfactorily,<sup>1</sup> all seem pleased, and gentlemen have been here from New Orleans and other distant points who are much pleased. I have knowledge of more cadets coming, and this being the first term, and being preceded by so much doubt, I don't know that we have reason to be disappointed with only forty. The Legislature meets next Monday, and then will begin the free discussion, which will settle the fact of professors' houses, and other little detailed improvements, which will go far to make my position here comfortable or otherwise. . . .

"I have two letters from John which I showed to Gen. Graham, who gave them to the Senator from this parish, who took them to Baton Rouge. In them John tells me he signed the Helper card without seeing it, not knowing it, but after Clark introduced his resolution<sup>2</sup> he would make no disclaimer. He was right and all men acquainted with the facts will say so, even southern men. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> The Seminary had duly opened at the beginning of January.

<sup>2</sup> John B. Clark. After the first ballot for Speaker (December, 1859) "Mr. Clark of Missouri introduced a resolution which created a most bitter controversy. It was to the effect that no member of the House who had indorsed the work of Hinton R. Helper, entitled '*The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It*,' was fit to be Speaker of the House." *John Sherman*, by Theodore E. Burton, p. 62.



"SEMINARY, *January 27, 1860.*

". . . Things move along here about as I expected. We have had many visitors, ladies with children, who part with them with tears and blessings, and I remark the fact that the dullest boys have the most affectionate mothers, and the most vivacious boys come recommended with all the virtues of saints. Of course, I promise to be a father to them all. We now have fifty-one, and the reputation of the order, system and discipline is already spreading and I receive daily letters asking innumerable questions. The Legislature also has met and the outgoing Governor Wickliffe has recommended to us the special attention of the Legislature, and a bill is already introduced to give us \$25,000 a year for two years, which is as long as the Legislature can appropriate. I think from appearances this bill will pass, in which case we can erect two professors' houses this summer.

"This sum of money will enable us to make a splendid place of this. In addition it is also proposed to make this an arsenal of deposit which will increase its importance, and enable me to avoid all teaching, which I want to do, confining myself exclusively to the supervision and management. Thus far not a soul has breathed a syllable about abolitionism to me. One or two have asked me if I was related to the gentleman of same name, whose name figures so conspicuously in Congress. I, of course, say he is my brother, which generally amuses them, because they regard him as awful bad. . . ."

“SEMINARY, *February 3, 1860.*

“. . . I am half sick tonight—have had the troubles that I anticipated with these boys. Some of them are very good, but some are ill bred, and utterly without discipline. A few nights since, one cadet reported another. It resulted in mutual accusations, the lie, blow, and finally the knife. Fortunately it was not used. I dismissed the one with the knife instantler, the other after examination I thought equally to blame for first giving the lie.

“Yesterday the friends of all parties came, and after making all sorts of apologies I had to restore. Fortunately both were fine young men, and no doubt the affray was one of passion and of sudden broil. It is against the rules here for cadets to use tobacco, but we know that they do use it, but this morning one did it so openly that I supposed he did it in defiance. I went to his room to see him, but he was out, and in the drawer of his washstand I found plenty of tobacco. I, of course, emptied it into the fire place. Soon after the young gentleman named C—— came to me, evidently instigated by others, and complained of ill treatment, and soon complained of my opening his drawer, intimating that it was a breach of propriety. Of course I soon advised him that his concealment, and breach of regulations, well known to him, was the breach of honor. He said he would not stay, and after some preliminaries I shipped him. Another came with a similar complaint and I sent him off, and there the matter ended. These two last were dull at books and noisy quarrelsome fellows and a good riddance. We had fifty-three, now fifty-one.

"We have refused to receive many after the 1st inst., and I have now an application from thirty in one school, but we think it best now to await the action of the Legislature to ascertain what they propose to do for us, and I also think it best to prepare some forty steady young men, as a nucleus on which to build the hereafter. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *February 10, 1860.*

"I have now crossed the line<sup>1</sup> and suppose I must rest satisfied with the title of the 'Old Man,' the 'cross old schoolmaster,' but time won't wait and we must rush on in the race to eternity. . . .

"We have just passed through a critical week, the struggle for mastery resulting in five boys being gone. It would take a volume to record it, but I am now rid of five noisy, insubordinate boys. Fifty-one still remain, not a recitation was missed, and I am fully supported. There can be but one master. I was prepared for this resistance but it hardly gave me a moment's concern, but since, I learn from Dr. Smith in the Legislature that it is doubtful whether Governor Wickliffe's bill will pass. Since old Brown has run out, Congress organized, Texas taken strong ground against secession, the Louisiana politicians have cooled down, and they are less zealous to build up a Military School. Dr. Smith wrote me to let him know the least sum we needed from the State to carry us through the year. I have notified him that Governor Wickliffe's sum is the least, that the institution must be sustained

<sup>1</sup> February 8, 1860, was Sherman's fortieth birthday.

at the start, and that proper provision must be made for the professors in the way of buildings. I wrote to General Graham telling him the outline of the London proposition, and that I expected Roelofson daily,<sup>1</sup> and that if I did not see in the proceedings of the Legislature some signs of providing for the institution and for me personally, I should be forced to leave. I have just received a letter from him and he seems in great distress. He has worked so long and so hard to build up this college; he is so delighted at present management and prospects, and so impressed with the belief that I alone can manage its multifarious interests, that he says while he will not stand in the light of my interest, he will not lose my services to the State. . . .

"I see by the papers that John was defeated for Speaker, but is likely to be prominent in the House, but he will be more careful hereafter in signing papers before he reads them and he has time enough before him to recover lost ground. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *February* 13, 1860.

"I received yesterday your letter of January 31. Roelofson came Saturday, and was in a great hurry to go off. He said he must be in Cincinnati February 18 to attend some business. I found the scheme was pretty much the same condition as it was last winter. . . . All admit the healthfulness of the place [Alexandria] which is inferable from the kind of ground. Indeed if you hear I have concluded to stay here, just

<sup>1</sup> Sherman at this time was seriously considering an attractive proposal from one Roelofson to go into business in London.

make up your mind to live and die here, because I am going to take the bit in my mouth, and resume my military character, and control my own affairs. Since I left New Orleans, I have felt myself oppressed by circumstances I could not control, but I begin to feel footing and will get saucy. But if I go to England I shall expect a universal panic, the repudiation of the great National Debt, and a blow up generally.

"I suppose I was the Jonah that blew up San Francisco, and it only took two months' residence in Wall Street to bust up New York, and I think my arrival in London will be the signal of the downfall of that mighty empire.

"Here I can't do much harm, if I can't do any good; and here we have solitude and banishment enough to hide from the misfortunes of the past.

"Therefore, if Louisiana will endow this college properly, and is fool enough to give me \$5,000 a year, we will drive our tent pins and pick out a magnolia under which to sleep the long sleep. But if she don't, then England must perish, for I predict financial misfortune to the land that receives me. . . ."

It is evident from other passages in the letters, not in the ironic humor just illustrated, that Sherman narrowly escaped making up his mind to go to London under an arrangement which would have kept him there for two years. He would then have been absent from the country at the outbreak of the war, and whether he would have re-entered the army at all is clearly a matter of speculation. That the Legislature of a Southern state was so unwilling to part with him

that it made the provisions for the Seminary which finally decided him to remain in Louisiana was no less clearly one of the inscrutable workings of destiny.

A letter of the summer when all men were beginning to wonder what the next administration at Washington would bring forth shows Sherman still a Northerner who could hold office in the South as honorably and consistently as any of his kind:

“ALEXANDRIA, *July* 10, 1860.

“. . . I feel little interest in politics and certainly am glad to see it realized that politicians can't govern the country. They may agitate, but cannot control. Let who may be elected, the same old game will be played, and he will go out of office like Pierce and Buchanan with their former honors all sunk and lost. I only wonder that honorable men should seek the office.

“I do not conceive that any of the parties would materially interfere with the slavery in the states, and in the territories it is a mere abstraction. There is plenty of room in the present Slave States for all the negroes, but the time has come when the Free States may annoy the Slave States by laws of a general declaration, but that they will change the relation of master and slave I don't believe. All the Congresses on earth can't make the negro anything else than what he is; he must be subject to the white man, or he must amalgamate or be destroyed. Two such races cannot live in harmony save as master and slave. Mexico shows the result of general equality and amalgamation, and the Indians give a fair illustration of the fate of negroes



if they are released from the control of the whites. Of course no one can guess what the wild unbridled passions of men may do, but I don't believe that the present excitement in politics is anything more than the signs of the passage of power from southern politicians to northern and western politicians. The negro is made the hobby, but I know that northern men don't care any more about the rights and humanities of the negroes than the southerners. At present negroes work under control of white men and the consequence is the annual yield of \$200,000,000 of cotton, sugar, and other produce that would not be without such labor; and so long as that is the case, I don't fear a change in this respect. . . ."

Between August and October of 1860 Sherman paid a visit to the North.<sup>1</sup> Soon after his return to Louisiana he wrote (November 3) to Mrs. Sherman:

"People here now talk as though disunion was a fixed thing. Men of property say that as this constant feeling of danger of abolitionism exists they would rather try a southern confederacy. Louisiana would not secede, but should South Carolina secede, I fear other southern states will follow, and soon general anarchy will prevail. I say but little, try and mind my own business, and await the issue of events."

A week later he wrote as follows:

"ALEXANDRIA, *November 10, 1860.*

"We have had a week of cold stormy rains, but it has cleared off and today is bright and warm. I am

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, I, 178-9.

going into town today and will leave this at the post office. The election came off on Tuesday and resulted in Alexandria for a majority for Breckenridge, next Bell, next Douglass. Of course there were no votes for Lincoln. Indeed he has no ticket in this state. I received a note from a friend advising me to vote. I thought the matter over, and concluded I would not vote. Technically I was entitled to a vote as I entered Louisiana just a year ago, but I thought I ought not to vote in this election, and did not. I would have preferred Bell, but I think he has no chance, and I do not wish to be subject to any political conditions. If I am to hold my place by a political tenure, I prefer again to turn vagabond. I would not be surprised to learn that my not voting was construed into a friendly regard for Lincoln, and that it might result in my being declared a public enemy. I shall, however, rest under a belief that now as the election is over, all this hard feeling will subside and peace once more settle on the country. We have no returns as yet. Maybe the mail tonight will bring some returns from New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, those large states that determine this election, but I do not count on any clear knowledge till next Monday. . . .

“No matter which way we turn there arise difficulties which seem insurmountable. In case Lincoln is elected, they say South Carolina will secede and that the Southern States will not see her forced back. Secession must result in civil war, anarchy and ruin to our present form of government, but if it is attempted it would be unwise for us to be here. But I still hope for quiet. . . .”

“ALEXANDRIA, *November 23, 1860.*

“. . . I now have all arrangements made for your coming down about that time [Christmas], but prudence dictates some caution, as political events do seem portentous. I have a letter from the cashier that he sent you the first of exchange, the second I now enclose to you for \$290. But by the very mail which brought it came the rumor that the banks are refusing exchange on the North, which cannot be true; also that goods were being destroyed on the Levee in New Orleans and that the Custom House was closed. I also notice that many gentlemen who were heretofore moderate in their opinions now begin to fall into the popular current, and go with the mad, foolish crowd that seems bent on a dissolution of this confederacy. The extremists in this quarter took the first news of the election of Lincoln so coolly that I took it for granted all would quietly await the issue, but I have no doubt that politicians have so embittered the feelings of the people, that they think the Republican party is bent on abolitionism, and they cease to reason or think of consequences. We are so retired up here, so much out of the way of news, that we hear nothing but stale exaggerations; but I feel that a change is threatened and I will wait patiently for a while. My opinions are not changed. If the South is bent on dissolution of course I will not ally our fate with theirs, because by dissolution they do not escape the very danger at which they grow so frantically mad. Slavery is in their midst and must continue, but the interest of slavery is much weaker in Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland than down here. Should

the Ohio River become a boundary between the two new combinations, there will begin a new change. The extreme South will look on Kentucky and Tennessee as the North, and in a very few years, the same confusion and discord will arise and a new dissolution, till each state and maybe each county will claim separate independence. If South Carolina precipitate this revolution, it will be because she thinks by delay, Lincoln's friends will kind of reconcile the middle wavering states, whereas now they may raise the cry of Abolition and unite all the Slave States. I had no idea that this would actually begin so soon, but the news from that quarter does look as though she certainly would secede, and that Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Texas would follow suit. All these might go, and still leave a strong rich confederated government, but then comes Mississippi and Louisiana. As these rest on the Mississippi and control its mouth, I know that the other states north will not submit to any molestation of the navigation by foreign states. If these two states and Arkansas follow suit, then there must be war, fighting, and that will continue till one or the other party is subdued. If Louisiana call a convention, I will not move, but if that convention resolves to secede on a contingency that I can foresee, then I must of course quit. It is not to be expected that the state would consent to trust me with arms and command if I did not go with them full lengths. I don't believe Louisiana would of herself do anything, but if South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas resolve no longer to wait, then Louisiana will do likewise. Then of course you will be safe where you are. . . ."

“ALEXANDRIA, *November 26, 1860.*

“I commenced writing a letter last night to Minnie, but a friend sent us out a newspaper of New Orleans, November 22, which had come up from New Orleans in a boat. For some reason the papers come to us very irregularly. The stage whenever it has passengers leaves behind the paper mail, and only brings the bags when there are few or no passengers. Well, of late, though letters come about as usual, our papers come along very straggling. Well, this newspaper so received brings intelligence, how true I know not, of a panic in New York, Baltimore and everywhere. Of course panics are the necessary consequence of the mammoth credit system, the habit of borrowing which pervades our country, and though panics transfer losses to the wrong shoulders still they do good. . . .

“This paper also announces that Governor Moore has called the Legislature together for December 10, and specially to consider the crisis of the country, and to call a Convention.

“You know that the theory of our government is, as construed by southern politicians, that a state, one or more, may withdraw from the Union, without molestation, and unless excitement abates, Louisiana will follow the lead of her neighbors. You will hear by telegraph the action of the Conventions of South Carolina and Alabama. Should they assert their right to secede, and initiate measures to that end, then you may infer that I will countermand my heretofore preparations for a move. Then it would be unsafe even for you to come South. For myself, I will not go with the South in a

disunion movement, and as my position at the head of a State Military College would necessarily infer fidelity and allegiance to the state as against the United States, my duty will be on the first positive act of disunion to give notice of my purpose.

"December 10 the Legislature meets. It is hardly possible a Convention will be called before January, and until the Convention acts, the state is not committed. Still, I think the tone of feeling in the Legislature will give me a clue to the future.

"I confess I feel uneasy from these events, and more so from the fact that the intelligence comes so piecemeal and unsatisfactory."

"ALEXANDRIA, *November 29, 1860.*

"This is a holiday—Thanksgiving and prayer; but holidays and Sundays are my worst days as then the Cadets are idle and mischievous.

"Governor Moore has issued his proclamation calling the Legislature together for December 10, and the proclamation is couched in ugly language, different from his usual more conservative tone. It is manifest to me now that the leading politicians of the state have conferred together and have agreed to go out of the Union, or at all events to favor the new doctrine of secession. The Legislature will determine the call of a Convention, and the Convention will decide very much according to the other events that may occur in the meantime. This imposes on us a change of purpose, and it will not do for you or any one to come south unless this state of feeling changes. I know the governor and believe



him an excellent thermometer of the political atmosphere of Louisiana. I hear that business is dead in New Orleans, all of which is an evidence that the abolitionists have succeeded in bringing on the 'Irresistible Conflict.'

"I am sick of this everlasting subject. The truth has nothing to do with this world. Here they know that all you in Ohio have to do is to steal niggers, and in Ohio, though the people are quiescent, yet they believe that the South are determined to enlarge the area of niggers. Like Burton in 'Toodles' I say, 'Damn the niggers.' I wish they were anywhere or [could] be kept at their work.

"I observe more signs of a loosened discipline here. Boys are careless and last night because the supper did not please them, they smashed the crockery and made a riot generally. Pistols were fired, which scared Joe<sup>1</sup> very much. His education has been neglected, but I think he will get used to it. We have dismissed five cadets and others must share their fate. . . . Still, this is a small matter susceptible of remedy, but the secession movement underlays the very safety of everything. . . ."

"ALEXANDRIA, *December* 16, 1860.

"The telegraph has announced to you ere this that Governor Moore, hurried on by the wild enthusiasm which now pervades the southern mind, has caused the forts at the mouth of the Mississippi to be occupied by volunteers from New Orleans ; also those at the outlets of Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne, and moreover, that he has caused a large force to surround the barracks

<sup>1</sup> "A bugler I picked up in New Orleans, a kind of circus man."  
—MS. letter, November 3, 1860.

at Baton Rouge, and the garrison to surrender. Major Haskin<sup>1</sup> will be much blamed, but he is a plain brave man, lost an arm in Mexico; but he had only a single company, in an open barracks, and was stationed there, as among friends, to protect the arsenal not against the people but against the negroes. All these are acts of hostility and war. The news will cause intense feeling in the North and West. They were entirely too precipitate, and Governor Moore is even censured here; still, the fact is manifest that the people of the South are in open rebellion against the government of the United States.

"I went to Alexandria in a hard rain yesterday, and saw Dr. Smith, Mr. Elgee Wise and others, members of the Convention and Legislature, and spoke my mind fully and clearly, that these were acts of unjustifiable war, and that I could no longer remain silent. I asked to be relieved. . . ."

"ALEXANDRIA, *December 18, 1860.*

". . . I cannot remain here much beyond January 23, the time set for the State Convention to dissolve the connection of this state with the United States. The Legislature only sat three days and passed unanimously the bills for arming the state and calling a convention. That convention has only to decree what has already been resolved on and proclaimed by the governor, that Louisiana cannot remain under a Black Republican President. The opinion is universal that disunion is resolved on, and the only open questions are—what states will compose the Southern Confederacy? I re-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Haskin.

gard the failure of Buchanan to strengthen Major Anderson at Fort Moultrie as absolutely fatal, as the evidence of contemptible pusillanimity of our general government—almost convincing me that the government is not worth saving. No wonder General Cass forthwith resigned. The banks in New Orleans continue good, and I will endeavor to send you a month's pay at the close of this month; but for mercy's sake be close and mean, for I cannot say how soon all my supplies will come to a conclusion. . . .”

At the opening of 1861 Sherman, as the two last letters have shown, had found his place untenable, and, having asked to be relieved of his post, was preparing for that severance of his relations with the state of Louisiana which is shown, in the official correspondence preserved in the *Memoirs*, to have been effected so creditably to all concerned in it. The letters to Mrs. Sherman during these final weeks speak clearly for his more intimate views of the conditions that surrounded him. In the first of them the reader can hardly fail to be struck with Sherman's prescience regarding the attack upon Sumter and the importance of the Mississippi, where his own powers were to be tested, in the impending conflict.

[Not dated: about the beginning of *January*, 1861.]

“ . . . The Governor recommends the establishment of a large arsenal here. We now have a limited supply of arms. I have announced my position; as long as Louisiana is in the Union I will serve her honestly and faithfully, but if she quits, I will quit too. I will not for

a day or even an hour occupy a position of apparent hostility to Uncle Sam.

"That government is weak enough, but is the only thing in America that has even the semblance of a government. These state governments are ridiculous pretences of a government, liable to explode at the call of any mob. I don't want to be premature, and will hold on to the last moment in hopes of change, but they seem to be pushing events ridiculously fast. There is an evident purpose, a dark design, not to allow time for thought and reflection. These Southern leaders understand the character of their people and want action before the spirit subsides. Robert Anderson commands at Charleston, and there I look for the first actual collision. Old Fort Moultrie, every brick of which is as plain now in my memory as the sidewalk in Lancaster, will become historical. It is weak and I can scale any of its bastions. If secession, dissolution and civil war do come, South Carolina will soon drop far astern, and the battle will be fought on the Mississippi. The Western States never should consent to a hostile people holding the mouth of the Mississippi. Should I be forced to act promptly I will turn up, either at St. Louis or Washington. Turner knows full well where I am, but he is angry with me about his charge against Ohio of nigger stealing. You remember my answer from Lancaster. I am very well. Weather cold and overcast."

"ALEXANDRIA, *January 5, 1861.*

"I have finished my Report, and placed all the papers in the hands of Dr. Smith, Vice President. I walked

into town the day before yesterday, poor Clay<sup>1</sup> being dead and buried. Dr. Smith was away and I only remained a few hours. Alexandria at best is not a cheerful town, but now decidedly the reverse. Everybody naturally feels the danger which envelops us all in one common cause. I have had nothing said to me at all, and I discuss the questions of the day freely with my equals, and try to keep my peace with loungers about the street corners and ferry boat landing. I always say what is my real belief, that though the Slavery question seems to be the question, that soon it will sink into insignificance.

“Our country has become so democratic, that the mere popular opinion of any town or village rises above the law. Men have ceased to look to constitutions and law books for their guides, but have studied popular opinion in bar rooms and village newspapers, and that was and is law. The old women and grannies of New England, reasoning from abstract principles, must defy the Constitution of the country. The people of the South, not relying on the Federal Government, must allow their people to favor filibustering expeditions against the solemn treaties of the land, and everywhere from California to Maine any man could do murder, robbery or arson if the people’s prejudices lay in that direction. And now things are at such a pass that no one section believes the other and we are beginning to fight. The right of secession is but the beginning of the end. It is utterly wrong, and the President ought never for one moment to have permitted the South

<sup>1</sup> A horse.

Carolínians to believe he would not enforce the revenue laws, and hold the public property in Charleston Harbor. Had he promptly reinforced Major Anderson, the Charlestonians would have been a little more circumspect. My only hope is that Major Anderson may hold out, that reinforcements may reach him, and that the people may feel that they can't always do as they please, or in other words that they ain't so free and independent as they think. In this view I am alone here, but I do so think and will say it. . . ."

"ALEXANDRIA, *January 8, 1861.*

". . . From what I see in the New Orleans papers, Anderson is still in possession of Fort Sumpter, and the general government has failed to reinforce him and will wait till he is attacked. This disgusts me, and I would not serve such a pusillanimous government. It merits dissolution. This fact will increase the chances of an attempt to prevent Lincoln's installation into office, and then we shall see whether the Wide-awakes will fight as well as carry cheap lamps of a night zig-zagging through the streets.

"I see every chance of long, confused and disorganizing Civil War, and I feel no desire to take a hand therein. When the time comes for reorganization, then will be the time. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *January 13, 1861.*

"Yours of the 4th is at hand. Our mails have been irregular, but this came on time. I see no change to note here in public sentiment. The fact that Seward has



been named as Secretary of State to Lincoln enables the leaders to show that their suspicions are right, that the Republicans and Abolitionists are identical. I am therefore confirmed in my opinion that the Cotton States are off, and it is an even chance with all the Slave States. I take the *Missouri Republican* and *National Intelligencer*, which seem to oppose secession, but they cannot stem the torrent. The revolution has begun, and the national government has shown weakness in all its attempts. Anderson is the only one who has acted. General Scott, in sending reinforcements, ought not to have trusted the *Star of the West*, the same in which we went to California seven years ago. She could not venture to receive a fire. Frigates and strong war steamers should have gone, which could have forced their way past the land batteries. I hope still this will be done. It will be a triumph to South Carolina to beat Uncle Sam.

"Still Charleston is nothing to New Orleans, and I am satisfied the forts at the mouth and the Lakes will be taken by order of Governor Moore of this state, before they are occupied by the United States. All these are acts of war. War has begun, and it is idle to say that the South is not in earnest. Louisiana has not yet seceded, yet the delegates favorable to such a course are elected, even in New Orleans where the union feeling is thought to be strongest. . . ."

"SEMINARY, *January 20, 1861.*

"Here is another Sunday. I have written you often enough of late to keep you in a perfect state of uneasiness, but it does seem that each day brings forth some-

thing new. I now have official notice that 3,300 muskets, 70,000 cartridges, etc., are sent here from Baton Rouge, which must be a part of those seized by the State or otherwise stolen, and I must make provision for their storage. I must move to the new house in order to afford room for them in my present quarters. But my stay here much longer is impossible. My opinions and feelings are so radically opposed to those in power that this cannot last long. I send you a copy of a letter I wrote to Governor Moore on the 18th, on the receipt of which he will be forced to act. . . .

“Those now in debt will suffer most, or least, for they will likely repudiate all debts. Down here they think they are going to have fine times—New Orleans a free port, whereby she can import goods without limit or duties, and sell to the up-river countries. But Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore will never consent that New Orleans should be a free port, and they subject to duties. The most probable result will be that New Orleans will be shut off from all trade, and the South, having no navy and no sailors, cannot raise a blockade without assistance from England, and that she will never receive. I have letters from General Graham and others, who have given up all hope of stemming the tide. All they now hope for is as peaceable a secession as can be effected. I heard Mr. Clay’s speech in 1850 on the subject of secession, and if he deemed a peaceable secession then as an absurd impossibility, much more so is it now, when the commercial interests of the North are so much more influential. . . .”

“SEMINARY, *January 27, 1861.*

“Since my last I have three letters from you—of latest date 16th inst. The mails have been much disordered by a break on the Mississippi Railroad. In my last I sent you a copy of a letter written to Governor Moore, to which I have received no answer. He is very busy indeed, Legislature and Convention both in session at Baton Rouge giving him hardly time to think of the Seminary. . . .

“The ordinance of Secession will pass in a day or so, but the Legislature was adjourned till February 4, so that no business can be transacted there for some days. It don't take long to pull down, and everybody is striving for the honor of pouring out the deepest insult to Uncle Sam. The very men who last 4th of July were most patriotic and exhausted their imaginations for pictures of the glories of our Union, are now full of joy and happiness that this accursed Union is wrecked and destroyed.

“This rapid popular change almost makes me a monarchist, and raises the question whether the self interest of one man is not a safer criterion than the wild opinions of ignorant men. From all I can read Missouri and Kentucky will go with the crowd South and will be more seriously affected than any other part of the country. . . .

“As soon as I hear from Governor Moore I will let you know when to expect me. I know that he, the Governor, will feel inclined to get rid of me *instantly*, but Dr. Smith wants me to stay for a successor, and he has no successor in his mind. If he proposes I should

stay till March, I will feel disposed to agree to it for pecuniary reasons, but I think the Governor will feel hurt at my letter, and will be disposed to get rid of me. At all events, my position being clearly defined I cannot be complicated by these secession movements. I do feel a little mean at being made partially accessory to the robbing of the Baton Rouge Arsenal, by receiving a part of the stolen property. . . ."

Writing on February 1, Sherman quoted Governor Moore's letter and a portion of Dr. Smith's, which are printed in full in the *Memoirs*, and express the genuine personal and official regret caused by his separation from the Seminary. His letter goes on to say:

"So you see I have at least the good will of my associates. I have called the Board for February 9, and expect to leave here by or before February 20. I shall delay a while in New Orleans, not long, and get to Lancaster by March. . . .

"I have a good letter from Turner in which he infers I cannot stay here, and advises me to come to Saint Louis, but points out nothing definite. He thinks Missouri will not secede, but if she does not they will have a severe contest there, for men who own negroes are blind to all interests other than those of Slavery.

"Reason has nothing to do in these times of change and revolution. Politicians start the movement and keep it alive by a process known to themselves, and the poor innocent people have nothing to do but follow their lead. It may not be so there, but I am not convinced. I see John takes bold ground. He is right.

If the government be a reality, it should defend its flag, property, and servants. Anderson should be reinforced if it cost ten thousand lives, and every habitation in Charleston.

"Also the seizure of these arsenals should be resented and the actors made to feel that the United States is a reality. But the time is not yet. . . ."

About the end of February Sherman turned his face northward, far poorer in prospects than he had been on coming to Louisiana, far richer in knowledge of the Southern people and of the nature of the problems to be solved by the dreaded processes of war. He carried with him also the experience of warm personal friendships formed in Louisiana. One of the staff of instructors at Alexandria who returned to the Seminary after fighting in the Confederate army, wrote to Sherman in 1875: "I remember well how it grieved you to leave us, and how sorry were we to see you go, and how great an influence was brought to bear on you to keep you at your post at the head of our school. Moore and Bragg and Beauregard and Dick Taylor all wrote you most urgently to stay."<sup>1</sup> Sherman's own letters show afresh how honestly reciprocal was all the reluctance for his departure.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, II, 504.

## VII

### THE WAR BEGUN

1861—1862

SHEERMAN was no exception to the rule that the men whose names were most closely linked with glory when the Civil War was done were at its beginning virtually unknown to fame. His military opportunities had been few and unimportant. His business experiments had been, by reason of the time at which they fell, misfortunes. Through a momentous conspiracy of circumstances, his work in Louisiana, auspiciously begun, had come to an unhappy end. Now, at forty-one, he was again adrift.

It was necessary for him to provide at once for the support of his family, and to this end he assumed on the 1st of April the presidency of a street railway in St. Louis. A few days later the government offered him the chief clerkship of the War Department, which he declined. He was unwilling, also, to volunteer for the brief term of service in the army which at first seemed sufficient to the authorities. When the three years' call came he offered himself without delay, and on the 14th of May was appointed colonel of the Thirteenth Regular Infantry, a regiment still to be formed. Be-



fore he left St. Louis to report to Washington for orders he wrote as follows to one of his brothers-in-law:

[TO THOMAS EWING, JR.]

"OFFICE ST. LOUIS R.R. Co.,

"ST. LOUIS, May 23, 1861.

". . . I am satisfied with Mr. Lincoln's policy, but I do not like that of the Blairs. I know Frank Blair openly declares war on slavery. I see him daily, and yesterday had a long talk with him. I say the time is not yet come to destroy slavery, but it may be to circumscribe it. We have not in America the number of inhabitants to replace the slaves, nor have we the national wealth to transport them to other lands. The constitution has given the owners certain rights which I should be loath to disturb. I declined the chief clerkship because I did not want it. You know enough of the social status of a Washington office-holder to appreciate my feelings when I say that I would infinitely prefer to live in St. Louis. I have seen enough of war not to be caught by its first glittering bait, and when I engage in this it must be with a full consciousness of its real character. I did approve of the President's call, and only said it should have been three hundred thousand instead of seventy-five. The result confirms my opinion. I did approve of Lyon's attack,<sup>1</sup> and said it

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's observations on this episode of the early days of the war in Missouri are fully recorded in the *Memoirs*, I, 200-202.

The reader will find that from this point forward fewer annotations are made. The history and biography of the period are so commonly accessible that many footnotes would appear superfluous.

was inevitable; only I thought the marshal should have demanded the arms which reached the camp unlawfully through the custom house. The firing on the citizens, I know, was in consequence of the nervousness of the new militia, was wrong, but just what every prudent person expected. I have always thought that if it could be avoided, Missouri should be held with as little feeling as possible, because of necessity her people must retain the rights of franchise and property. Wherever I see that persons miscalculate the state of feeling I endeavor to correct it, because a fatal mistake in war is to underrate the strength, feeling and resources of an enemy. . . .”

Writing to Thomas Ewing, Jr. again on the 3rd of June, Sherman declared, with characteristic foresight: “After all the Mississippi River is the hardest and most important task of the war, and I know of no one competent, unless it be McClellan. But as soon as real war begins, new men, heretofore unheard of, will emerge from obscurity, equal to any occasion. Only I think it is to be a long war,—very long,—much longer than any politician thinks.”

On the way to Washington from St. Louis, Sherman wrote thus to his wife:

“PITTSBURGH,

“*Sunday, June 8, 1861.*

“. . . Now that the War has begun, no man can tell when it will end. Who would have supposed old England, chuck full of Abolitionists, would side with the

southern against their northern descendants. Nations like men are governed solely by self interest, and England needs cotton, and the return market for the manufactures consumed in exchange. Again corruption seems so to underlie our government that even in this time of trial, cheating in clothes, blankets, flour, bread, everything, is universal. It may be the simple growl of people unaccustomed to the privations of war. Again some three or four hundred thousand people are now neglecting work and looking to war for the means of livelihood. These, hereafter, will have a say in politics, so that I feel that we are drifting on the high seas, and no one knows the port to which we are drifting. The best chance of safety is our old government, with all its political chicanery and machinery, and to it we tie our fortunes. . . ."

Ordered first to inspection duty in and about Washington, Sherman found himself, June 30th, in command of the Third Brigade of the First Division of the army about to set forth on the march which ended at Bull Run.

"FORT CORCORAN, Opposite Georgetown,

*"July 3, 1861, Monday.*

"... On Friday I received orders to report to General McDowell at Arlington. I did so and received orders to relieve Colonel Hunter in the command of this Brigade composed of three militia regiments and two companies of regulars, one of cavalry and one of artil-

lery. I occupy along with many others a beautiful cottage in full view of Georgetown and Washington City just over the aqueduct. The engineers have erected a fort named after a New York colonel, Irish, Corcoran, who is most enthusiastic in the cause, and several other little redoubts, all designed to protect Georgetown and consequently Washington from an approach this way. . . .

"As yet I am simply studying the condition of affairs in anticipation of a forward movement. Of course, this depends on affairs with McClellan, Patterson and Butler. When we do move it will be in some force, but we know that Beauregard has long been expecting such an advance, and is as well prepared as he can be. It may be after all that he may retire, but I think he will fight, and it may be it will be in the nature of a duel. Better keep even this to yourself. I would not have anything traced back to me.

"The manner and fact that nothing is now secret or sacred from the craving for public news is disgraceful to us as a people. The South manage to keep their councils better than we.

"Beauregard has ceased even to think of attacking. All his dispositions look to defense. . . ."

In a letter of July 16, the day on which the army began its forward movement, Sherman wrote:

"I still regard this as but the beginning of a long war, but I hope my judgment therein is wrong, and that the people of the South may yet see the folly of their unjust rebellion against the most mild and paternal govern-

ment ever designed for men. John will in Washington be better able to judge of my whereabouts and you had better send letters to him. As I read them I will tear them up, for every ounce on a march tells.

"Tell Willy <sup>1</sup> I have another war sword which he can add to his present armory. When I come home again I will gratify his ambition on that score, though truly I do not choose for him or Tommy <sup>2</sup> the military profession. It is too full of blind chances to be worthy of a first rank among callings."

"CAMP 1 MILE WEST OF CENTREVILLE,

"26 FROM WASHINGTON, *July 19, 1861.*

"I wrote to John yesterday asking him to send you my letters that you might be assured of my safety. Thus far the enemy have retired before us. Yesterday our General Tyler made an unauthorized attack on a battery over Bull Run. They fired gun for gun, and on the whole had the best of it. The General finding Centreville, a strong place, evacuated, followed their tracks to Bull Run which has a valley, deeply wooded, admitting only of one narrow column. I was sent for and was under fire about half an hour, the rifled cannon shot cutting the trees over head and occasionally pitching into the ground—three artillerists, one infantry and three horses in my brigade, with several wounded. I have not yet learned the full extent of damage, and as it was a blunder, don't care. I am uneasy at the fact that the volunteers do pretty

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's oldest son.

<sup>2</sup> A younger son.

much as they please, and on the slightest provocation bang away. The danger from this desultory firing is greater than from the enemy, as they are always so close, whilst the latter keep a respectable distance.

"We were under orders to march at 6 P. M., but it was properly countermanded as night marches with raw troops are always dangerous. Now our orders are to march at 2½ A. M. The division of Tyler to which my Brigade belongs will advance along a turnpike road to a bridge on Bull Run. This bridge is gone, and there is a strong battery on the opposite shore of the river. Here I am summoned to a council at 8 P. M. at General McDowell's camp about a mile distant. I am now there, all the Brigade commanders are present, and only a few minutes intervene before they all come to this table.

"I know tomorrow and next day we shall have hard work, and I will acquit myself as well as I can. With regulars, I would have no doubts, but these volunteers are subject to stampedes.

"Yesterday there was an ugly stampede of 800 Massachusetts men. The Ohio men claim their discharge, and so do others of the three months men. Of these I have the Irish 69th New York, which will fight. . . .

"My best love to all. My faith in you and the children is perfect, and let what may befall me I feel they are in a fair way to grow up in goodness and usefulness.

"Goodbye for the present."



In the first humiliation of defeat Sherman wrote briefly to his wife:

“FORT CORCORAN, *July 24, 1861.*

“On my arrival back here, carried by the shameless flight of the armed mob we led into Virginia, I tried to stay the crowd, and held them in check to show at least some front to the pursuing force. Yesterday the President and Mr. Seward visited me, and I slipped over for a few minutes last night to see your father. John S. and Tom<sup>1</sup> have seen me and promise to write you. The battle was nothing to the absolute rout that followed and yet exists. With shameless conduct the volunteers continue to flee. A regiment, the New York 79th, Scots, were forming to march over to Washington, and I have commanded them to remain. If they go, in spite of all I can do, there will remain here but one company of artillery, 90 strong, and a Wisconsin regiment ready to run, and Beauregard is close at hand. So it seems to be true that the North is after all pure bluster. Washington is in greater danger now than ever.

“I will stand by my post, an illustration of what we all knew, that when real danger came, the politicians would clear out. The proud army characterized as the most extraordinary on earth has turned out the most ordinary.

“Well, as I am sufficiently disgraced now, I suppose soon I can sneak into some quiet corner. I was under heavy fire for hours, touched on the knee and shoulder, my horse shot through the leg, and was every way ex-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ewing, Jr.

posed, and cannot imagine how I escaped except to experience the mortification of retreat, rout, confusion, and now abandonment by whole regiments. I am much pressed with business regulating the flight of all, save the few to remain on this side of the river.

"Last night I received several letters from you, and took time to read them, and now trust to Tom and others to tell you of the famous deed of Bull Run.

"Courage our people have, but no government."

Four days later Sherman found leisure to write a full account of the battle and his part in it:

"FORT CORCORAN, *July 28, Sunday.*

"I have already written to you since my return from the unfortunate defeat at Bull Run. I had previously conveyed to you the doubts that oppressed my mind on the score of discipline.

"Four large columns of poorly disciplined militia left this place, the Long bridge and Alexandria, all concentrating at a place called Centreville, twenty-seven miles from Washington. We were the first column to reach Centreville, the enemy abandoning all defences en route.

"The first day of our arrival our commander, General Tyler, advanced on Bull Run, about two and a half miles distant, and against orders engaged the batteries. He sent back to Centreville and I advanced with our Brigade, when we lay for half an hour, amidst descending shots, killing a few of our men. The batteries were full a mile distant, and I confess I, nor any person in my Brigade, saw an enemy.

"Towards evening we returned to Centreville.

"That occurred on Thursday. We lay in camp till Saturday night by which the whole army was assembled in and about Centreville. We got orders for march at 2½ Sunday morning,—our column of three brigades—Schenck, Sherman and Keyes—to move straight along a road to Bull Run; another of about 10,000 men to make a circuit by the right (Hunter's), and come upon the enemy in front of us; Heintzelman's column of about similar strength also to make a wide circuit to sustain Hunter. We took the road first, and about 6 A.M. came in sight of Bull Run. We saw in the grey light of morning men moving about, but no signs of batteries. I rode well down to the stone bridge which crosses the stream, saw plenty of trees cut down, some bush huts, such as soldiers use on picket guard, but none of the evidences of strong fortifications we had been led to believe.

"Our business was simply to threaten, and give time for Hunter and Heintzelman to make their circuit. We arranged our troops to this end, Schenck to the left of the road, and I to the right, Keyes behind in reserve. We had with us two six gun batteries, and a 30lb. gun. This was fired several times, but no answer. We shifted positions several times, firing whenever we had reason to suppose there were any troops. About ten or eleven o'clock, we saw the cloud of dust in the direction of Hunter's approach, saw one or more regiments of the enemy leave their line and move in that direction, soon the firing of musketry and guns showing the engagement had commenced. Early in the morning I

saw a flag flying behind some trees. Some of the soldiers seeing it called out, "Colonel, there's a flag, a flag of truce." A man in the field with his dog and gun, called out, "No, it is no flag of truce, but a flag of defiance." I was at the time studying the ground and paid no attention to him. About nine o'clock I was well down to the Run with some skirmishers, and observed two men on horseback ride along a hill, descend, cross the stream, and ride out towards us. He had a gun in his hand which he waved over his head, and called out to us, "You d——d black abolitionists, come on," etc. I permitted some of the men to fire on him, but no damage was done. We remained some time thus awaiting the action which had begun on the other side of Bull Run. We could see nothing, but heard the firing and could judge that Hunter's column steadily advanced. About 2 P. M. they came to a stand, the firing was severe and stationary. General Tyler rode up to me and remarked that he might have to send the N. Y. 69th to the relief of Hunter. A short while after, he came up and ordered me with my whole Brigade, some 3,400 men, to cross over to Hunter. I ordered the movement, led off, found a place where the men could cross, but the battery could not follow.

"We crossed the stream, and ascended the bluff bank, moving slowly to permit the ranks to close up. When about half a mile back from the stream, I saw the parties in the fight, and the first danger was that we might be mistaken for secessionists and fired on. One of my regiments had on the grey uniform of the Virginia troops. We first fired on some retreating secessionists,

our Lieutenant Colonel Haggerty was killed, and my bugler by my side had his horse shot dead. I moved on and joined Hunter's column. They had a pretty severe fight. Hunter was wounded, and the unexpected arrival of my Brigade seemed a great relief to all. I joined them on a high field with a house, and as we effected the junction the secessionists took to the woods and were seemingly retreating, and General McDowell who had accompanied Hunter's column ordered me to join in the pursuit. I will not attempt to describe you the scene. Their batteries were on all the high hills overlooking the ground which we had to cross, and they fired with great vigor. Our horse batteries pursued from point to point returning the fire, whilst we moved on, with shot, shell and cannister over and all round us. I kept to my horse and head of the Brigade, and moving slowly, came upon their heavy masses of men, behind all kinds of obstacles.

"They knew the ground perfectly, and at every turn we found new ground, over which they poured their fire. At last we came to a stand, and with my regiments in succession we crossed a ridge and were exposed to a very heavy fire. First one regiment and then another and another were forced back, not by the bayonet but by a musketry and rifle fire, which it seemed impossible to push our men through. After an hour of close contest our men began to fall into confusion. One hundred and eleven had been killed, some two hundred and fifty wounded and the soldiers began to fall back in disorder. My horse was shot through the fore leg. My knee was cut round by a ball, and another had hit

my coat collar and did not penetrate; an aide, Lt. Bagley, was missing, and spite of all exertions the confusion increased, and the men would not re-form. Similar confusion had already occurred among other regiments, and I saw we were gone. Had they kept their ranks we were the gainers up to that point, only our field batteries, exposed, had been severely cut up by theirs, partially covered. Then for the first time I saw the carnage of battle, men lying in every conceivable shape, and mangled in a horrible way; but this did not make a particle of impression on me, but horses running about riderless with blood streaming from their nostrils, lying on the ground hitched to guns, gnawing their sides in death. I sat on my horse on the ground where Ricketts' Battery had been shattered to fragments, and saw the havoc done. I kept my regiments under cover as much as possible, till the last moment, when it became necessary to cross boldly a ridge and attack the enemy, by that time gathered in great strength behind all sorts of cover.

"The volunteers up to that time had done well, but they were repulsed regiment by regiment, and I do think it was impossible to stand long in that fire. I did not find fault with them, but they fell into disorder—an incessant clamor of tongues, one saying they were not properly supported, another that they could not tell friend from foe; but I observed the gradual retreat going on and did all I could to stop it. At last it became manifest we were falling back, and as soon as I perceived it, I gave it direction by the way we came, and thus we fell back to Centreville, some four miles. We



had with our Brigade no wagons, they had not crossed the river. At Centreville came pouring in the confused masses of men, without order or system. Here I supposed we should assemble in some order the confused masses and try to stem the tide. Indeed I saw but little evidence of being pursued, though once or twice their cavalry interposed themselves between us and our rear. I had read of retreats before, have seen the noise and confusion of crowds of men at fires and shipwrecks, but nothing like this. It was as disgraceful as words can portray, but I doubt if volunteers from any quarter could do better. Each private thinks for himself. If he wants to go for water, he asks leave of no one. If he thinks right, he takes the oats and corn, and even burns the house of his enemy. As we could not prevent these disorders on the way out, I always feared the result, for everywhere we found the people against us. No curse could be greater than invasion by a volunteer army. No Goths or Vandals ever had less respect for the lives and property of friends and foes, and henceforth we ought never to hope for any friends in Virginia. McDowell and all the generals tried their best to stop these disorders, but for us to say we commanded that army is no such thing. They did as they pleased. Democracy has worked out one result, and the next step is to be seen. Beauregard and Johnston were enabled to effect a junction by the failure of Patterson to press the latter, and they had such accurate accounts of our numbers and movements that they had all the men they wanted. We had never more than 18,000 engaged, though some ten or twelve thousand were

within a few miles. After our retreat here I did my best to stop the flying masses, and partially succeeded, so that we once more present a front: but Beauregard has committed a sad mistake in not pursuing us promptly. Had he done so, he could have stampeded us again, and gone into Washington.

"As it is, I suppose their plan is to produce riot in Baltimore, cross over above Leesburg, and come upon Washington through Maryland. Our rulers think more of who shall get office, than who can save the country. Nobody, no man, can save the country. The difficulty is with the masses. Our men are not good soldiers. They brag, but don't perform, complain sadly if they don't get everything they want, and a march of a few miles uses them up. It will take a long time to overcome these things, and what is in store for us in the future I know not. I purpose trying to defend this place if Beauregard approaches Washington by this route, but he has now deferred it some days and I rather think he will give it up.

"The newspapers will tell ten thousand things, none of which are true. I have had no time to read them, but I know no one now has the moral courage to tell the truth. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, *August 3, 1861.*

"I sent you a long letter a few days ago, telling you all about Bull Run. The disaster was serious in its effect on the men who, whether they ought or not to be, are discouraged beyond measure. All the volunteers continue in a bad state, but we must do the best we can with them.

"It seems regulars do not enlist, because of the preference always given to volunteers, whose votes are counted even in the ranks. I doubt if our democratic form of government admits of that organization and discipline without which an army is a mob. Congress is doing all that is possible in the way of laws and appropriations, and McClellan is determined to proceed slowly and cautiously.

"I wish we had more regulars to tie to. We must be the assailant and our enemy is more united in feeling, and can always choose their ground. It was not entrenchments but the natural ground and woods of which they took good advantage, while we in pursuit had to cross open fields and cross the crests of hills which obstructed a view of their forces.

"This must continue to be the case. Beauregard must have suffered much, else his sagacity would have forced him to take Washington, which he well might.

"I prefer you should go to housekeeping in Lancaster. Don't come here. I would not permit you to visit my camp. I have as much as I can do to keep my officers and men from living in Washington, and shall not set a bad example. I never expect again to move you from Lancaster. The simple chances of war, provided we adhere to the determination of subduing the South, will, of course, involve the destruction of all able-bodied men of this generation and go pretty deep into the next.

"'Tis folly to underestimate the task, and you see how far already the nation has miscalculated. The real war has not yet begun. The worst will be down the Mississippi, and in Alabama and Mississippi, provided,

of course, we get that far. Already has the war lasted since December last, and we are still on the border, defeated and partly discouraged. I am less so than most people because I expected it. . . .

"'Tis said I am to be Brigadier General. If so, I know it not yet. I have closely minded my business, which is a bad sign for favor."

"WASHINGTON, *August 3, 1861.*

". . . I still am acting as a Brigadier General in command of six regiments of volunteers called by courtesy soldiers, but they are all we have got and God only knows the issue. Our adversaries have the weakness of slavery in their midst to offset our democracy, and 'tis beyond human wisdom to say which is the greater evil. I learn today that the President selected Hunter, Sherman and Buell out of the list for Brigadier Generals of the Regular Army, but Major Garesché tells me the list has been changed, that no appointments will now be made in the regular army, but that a whole batch of Brigadiers will be made, ranking according to former commission. This will still keep me where I want, in a modest position till time and circumstances show us daylight.

"McClellan told me last night he should proceed with great caution, endeavoring to advance so as never to make a slip backward. I am now satisfied that the Southern army is not much better than ours, else Beauregard would certainly have taken Washington. If they could, they also from their central position would throw their force on Banks or Rosecrans.

"In East Virginia all are secessionists and we can gain no authentic information of their movements by spies. It is different, I suppose, in West Virginia. At all events in invading Virginia from the Chesapeake the army must be of a size to encounter the whole southern army. Now that they have been successful, Davis can assemble just as many men as he wants, and they are as well armed, dressed and fed as we are. Indeed I never saw such a set of grumblers as our volunteers about their food, clothing, arms, etc., and I shall make a requisition for two nurses per soldier to nurse them in their helpless, pitiful condition.

"Oh—but we had a few regulars. But all our legislation has so favored the volunteer that no man will enlist in the regular service. I propose to go on as heretofore, to endeavor to fill my place as well as possible, to meddle as little as possible with my superiors, and to give my opinion only when asked for. . . .

"You may hereafter address me at the Georgetown Post Office. I send over there pretty often for marketing. Address me, Colonel W. T. S., Fort Corcoran, Georgetown, D. C. If I am made Brigadier General, use General W. T. S. as above. I know not why I feel no ambition. If we could handle volunteers so that our plans could be carried out I would launch out, but I know that they will mar any plan and blast the fair fame of anybody. They, of course, the people, can't do wrong. If defeat arises, then it is mismanagement, masked batteries and such nonsense. . . ."

[Undated: apparently *August*, 1861.]

“The incessant wants of 5,000 men, all complaining, with sick wives and children and fathers at home, wanting to go to Georgetown and Washington and everywhere where they should not go, growling about clothing, shoes, beef, pork, and everything! Now in an army all these things are regulated by sergeants, captains and colonels. A brigadier only has to operate through them. An irregularity in a regiment is checked by a word to the colonel; but here every woman within five miles who has a peach stolen or roasting ear carried off comes to me to have a guard stationed to protect her tree, and our soldiers are the most destructive men I have ever known. It may be other volunteers are just as bad, indeed the complaint is universal, and I see no alternative but to let it take its course. When in Fairfax County we had a majority of friends. Now I suppose there is not a man, woman or child but would prefer Jeff Davis or the Czar of Russia to govern them rather than an American volunteer army. My only hope now is that a common sense of decency may be inspired into the minds of this soldiery to respect life and property. Officers hardly offer to remonstrate with their men, and all devolves on me. As usual I cannot lie down, go away, without fifty people moving after me. Had I some good regulars I could tie to them. As it is, all the new Brigadiers must manufacture their Brigades out of raw material. Napoleon allowed three years as a minimum, Washington one year. Here it is expected in nine days, and Bull Run is the consequence. I don't believe McClellan will be hurried, and the



danger to our country is so imminent that all hands are now conscious that we must build up from the foundation. . . .

"A good many little incidents, shooting of sentinels and pickets, all the cruel, useless attendants of war occur daily, but I no longer apprehend an attack by Beauregard's forces, though strange to say he receives news much more freely than we do. McClellan has notice of large forces coming up from Georgia, Alabama and the extreme South. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, D. C.,

*"August 17, 1861.*

"... I have not undressed of a night since Bull Run, and the volunteers will not allow of sleep by day. Two regiments have mutinied, claiming that the United States has no right to hold their services. Under the influence of a battery of artillery and squadron of regular cavalry the number who refused duty dwindled down to sixty-five in one regiment and thirty-five in another, all of whom were marched down to the Navy Yard and placed in irons on board a man-of-war. The remainder of the men and officers of these regiments are sick of the war and want to go home. McClellan still thinks Beauregard will attack the city. Most assuredly he should do so, but it may be he will not.

"I was over here a few days ago and met Robert Anderson who sent for me today. It seems he is to organize some kind of a force in Kentucky and Tennessee to support the general government, and has asked for me. The President agrees to send me as soon as

McClellan can spare me and McClellan will not leave me go, until he conceives the city to be out of danger—say one week—then I am to be sent into Kentucky post haste. Whether I am to be allowed to stop a day at Lancaster or not I cannot imagine, but I suppose not. I will endeavor to stop to see you for a moment, but I know how it will be—McClellan will not relieve me from duty till the latest moment, when Anderson will be calling for me in Kentucky. The bluer the times the more closely should one cling to his country. . . .

“I do not know why we should not have a government. The old government was as mild as any on earth, and it may be that it is the best; but true it is, its administration had become very corrupt. Even now, it is hard to hold her people to their allegiance; but we must have a future, and a government, and I will not attempt to advise or guide events till I see some end to this muddle. Thus far, the Union party has the worst of the fight, and our armies are too scattered. If they order me to any place I'll go if I can. With Anderson I suppose we will have to go into Kentucky and Tennessee to organize an army in the face of that prejudice which you complained so much about in Missouri. That prejudice pervades the public mind and it will take years to overcome. In all the southern states, they have succeeded in impressing the public mind that the North is governed by a mob (of which unfortunately there is too much truth) and in the South that all is chivalry and gentility.

“Out of this chaos some order in time must arise, but how or when I cannot tell. . . .

"I have just sworn in as a Brigadier General, and therefore I suppose I might as well admit the title. . . ."

"FORT CORCORAN, *August 19, 1861.*

". . . Among my regiments are three who claim to have been enlisted only for three months, but the Secretary of War has decided they are in for two years. In each of the regiments there has been a kind of mutiny, not open and decided, but a determination to do no duty.

"Yesterday, Sunday, I had two companies of regular cavalry and one of artillery ready to attack one of these regiments. For some hours I thought I would have to give an order to fire, but they did not like the artillery and have gone to duty; but I think this is a bad class of men to depend on to fight. They may eat their rations and go on parade, but when danger comes they will be sure to show the white feather.

"Still, they are now in a state of subjection. I went over to Washington on this business some days ago, saw the President and General Scott; at the table of the latter I met Robert Anderson for the first time. I only had a few words with him, but on Saturday he sent for me to meet him at Willard's. There I found Senator Johnson, a Mr. Maynard, and two or three other members of Congress from Kentucky and Tennessee. One of them, Senator Johnson I think, premised by saying that it was the determination of the government to send assistance to the Union men of Kentucky and Tennessee; that there were large numbers of them who merely needed arms, money and organization; that Anderson

was the proper general to organize and lead the movement; but that his health was liable at any moment to fail him, and the President had agreed that he might select any three of the Brigadiers to go with him; that he had at once asked for me, and two others, Burnside and Thomas, which was conceded; that when McClellan heard I was asked for he did not want to spare me, as he thought there remained imminent danger of an attack here. Then Anderson said he would prefer to wait a few days till things assumed a more settled shape—say seven to ten days, at the expiration of which time I should be relieved, and ordered to Kentucky. I have said or done nothing one way or other, but in about seven days I will, if nothing threatening happens, apply for relief that I may stop at Lancaster to see you, for a day or so. I expect to go to Louisville and thence through East Kentucky and Tennessee, to see myself the state of the country, and if possible, to organize resistance to the southern Confederacy. It is a matter of great importance and upon it may hang the existence of the present government.

“Most assuredly events have favored the southern Confederacy, and instead of making friends, the administration seems to have lost ground, not only in the South and Middle States, but also in the North. The clamor for discharge on every possible frivolous pretext has been a severe blow to the army and may be to the country. I hear that the new enlistments drag. This every reasonable person must have apprehended from the foolish cry first raised, a mere impulse sure to be followed by reaction. . . .”

In an undated letter written while Sherman was still waiting to be liberated for the service in Kentucky and Tennessee, he wrote: "I hardly know my sphere in Kentucky, but it will be political and military combined. I think Anderson wanted me because he knows I seek not personal fame or glory, and that I will heartily second his plans and leave him the fame. Most assuredly does he esteem my motives. Not till I see daylight ahead do I want to lead. But when danger threatens and others slink away I am and will be at my post."

Sherman's experiences in Kentucky, where, through the ill health of General Anderson, the command devolved, against his will, upon him, were of the most trying nature. Lacking the support which he felt the government owed him, he tasted the very dregs of discouragement and chagrin. The *Memoirs* describe the circumstances which led to the suspicion that Sherman's troubles in Kentucky had unbalanced his mind, and show how false the suspicion was. The unpublished letters of this brief period throw little light upon the more important aspects of the war, and may be passed over. So, too, may Sherman's own movements through the interval between his quitting the Kentucky command in November and his participation in the Battle of Shiloh. On April 3, 1862, he wrote to Mrs. Sherman from camp at Pittsburgh Landing, Tennessee: "On our part McCook, Thomas and Nelson's Divisions are coming from Nashville and are expected about Monday (this is Thursday) when I suppose we must advance to attack Corinth or some other point on the Memphis and

Charleston Road." It was on Sunday and Monday, the 6th and 7th, that the battle occurred—the Confederate army making the attack. For Sherman's part in it the two following letters speak:

"CAMP SHILOH, April 11, 1862.

"Well, we have had a big battle where they shot real bullets and I am safe, except a buckshot wound in the hand and a bruised shoulder from a spent ball. The first horse I rode was one I captured from the enemy soon after I got here, a beautiful sorrel race mare that was as fleet as a deer, and very easy in her movements to which I had become much attached. She was first wounded and then shot dead under me. This occurred Sunday when the firing on both sides was terrific, and I had no time to save saddle, holsters or valise. I took the horse of my aid McCoy<sup>1</sup> till it was shot, when I took my doctor's horse and that was shot. My camp was in advance of all others and we caught the first thunder, and they captured all our tents and two horses of mine hitched to the trees near my tent were killed, so I am completely unhorsed. The first man killed in the

<sup>1</sup> After the first appearance of this letter in *Scribner's Magazine*, April, 1909, Captain J. T. Taylor of Leavenworth, Kansas, who was one of Sherman's aides at Shiloh, informed me that it was his horse, and not Captain McCoy's which was shot under the General. In corroboration of the statement, he sent me letters of General Sherman vouching for the fact that Captain Taylor lost a horse in the manner described, and calling upon the War Department to reimburse him for it. In Captain Taylor's letter (April 12, 1909) he says: "Of course I do not expect any correction or controversy to grow out of this. General Sherman had greater things on his mind day and night than the name of an aide." He informs me, further, that he is the sole survivor of Sherman's staff at Shiloh.—*Editor*.



battle was my orderly close by my side, a young, handsome, faithful soldier who carried his carbine ever ready to defend me. His name was Holliday, and the shot that killed him was meant for me. After the battle was over I had him brought to my camp and buried by a tree scarred with balls and its top carried off by a cannon ball.

"These about embrace all the personal events connected with myself. My troops were very raw and some regiments broke at the first fire. Others behaved better, and I managed to keep enough all the time to form a command and was the first to get back to our front line. The battle on Sunday was very severe. They drove back our left flank on the river, but I held the right flank out about a mile and a half, giving room for reinforcements to come in from Crump's Landing to our north, and for Buell's army to land. Beauregard, Bragg, Johnston, Breckenridge, and all their big men were here, with their best soldiers and after the battle was over I found among the prisoners an old Louisiana cadet named Barrow, who sent for me and told me all about the others, many of whom were here and knew they were fighting me. I gave him a pair of socks, drawers and shirt and treated him very kindly. I won't attempt to give an account of the battle, but they say that I accomplished some important results, and General Grant makes special mention of me in his report which he showed me. I have worked hard to keep down, but somehow I am forced into prominence and might as well submit.

"One thing pleased me well. On Sunday we caught thunder and were beaten back. Buell arrived

very opportunely and came out to see me. The plan of operations was agreed on, and his fresh Kentucky troops to advance boldly out direct from the steamboat landing to Shiloh, my headquarters. I was on the right and to advance when he got abreast of me. This was done, and I edged to the road, and reached it about five hundred yards from here, just where the hardest fighting was, and then met the same Kentucky troops I had at Muldraugh's Hill. They all recognized me and such shouting you never heard. I asked to pass their ranks and they gave me the lead. I have since visited their camps and never before received such marks of favor. John's brigade is also here, indeed we must now have 75,000 men. Figures begin to approximate my standard. Halleck is coming with reinforcements. We have been attacked and beaten off our enemy. Now we must attack him.

"This would occur at once, but it has been raining so that our roads are almost impassable. The enemy expected to crush us before Buell got here. The scenes on this field would have cured anybody of war. Mangled bodies, dead, dying, in every conceivable shape, without heads, legs; and horses! I think we have buried 2,000 since the fight, our own and the enemy's; and the wounded fill houses, tents, steamboats and every conceivable place. My division had about 8,000 men, at least half ran away, and out of the remaining half, I have 302 soldiers, 16 officers killed, and over 1,200 wounded. All I can say this was a battle, and you will receive so many graphic accounts that my picture would be tame. I know you will read all accounts,

cut out paragraphs with my name for Willy's future study, all slurs you will hide away, and gradually conceive yourself that I am a soldier as famous as General Greene. I still feel the horrid nature of this war, and the piles of dead and wounded and maimed makes me more anxious than ever for some hope of an end, but I know such a thing cannot be for a long, long time. Indeed I never expect it, or to survive it. . . ."

"CAMP SHILOH, TENN., *April 24, 1862.*

"I have written several letters of late to you, to Willy and your mother. Tell Theresa <sup>1</sup> I thank her for hers, but writing is painful to my hand and she must excuse me for a few days. At first the wound gave me no pain, but I rode so much that when it began to inflame it got very sore, and affected my fingers, and they are quite stiff. I had to resort to poultice, but now simple bandage, and in a few days it will be well again. In the small pain I have suffered I can feel for the thousands of poor fellows, with all sorts of terrible wounds such as I have been compelled to witness; but my time has been so absorbed by the care of the living that I could pay little attention to the dead and wounded, but they have been well cared for. The only difficulty is that hundreds and thousands tired of the war, and satisfied with what they have seen, have taken advantage of slight wounds and gone home. As usual the noisy clamorous ones, "spiling" for a fight have gone home to tell of their terrible deeds and left others to bear the battles still to be fought. How few know the dangers attending this

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sherman's sister.

war. The very men who were most clamorous for fight were the first to run, and leave a few to stand the brunt of Sunday. I knew this beforehand, and took it so easily that many wondered, thinking me indifferent and nonchalant. I sent a copy of my map to your father, and now enclose the rough notes of my official report, from which I think you can trace my movements. All the troops south of the main Corinth road were forced back to the river. I held my front line till  $10\frac{1}{4}$  A. M., fell back to the line of McClelland's camps, and fought there till near 4 P. M., and took up a final position for night, back of McArthur's headquarters, at all times the furthest out; on Monday advanced almost over the same ground and reached Shiloh at 4 P. M.

"The hue and cry against Grant about surprise is wrong. I was not surprised and I was in advance. Prentiss was not covered by me, and I don't believe he was surprised, although he is now a prisoner, cannot be heard. It is outrageous for the cowardly newsmongers thus to defame men whose lives are exposed. The real truth is, the private soldiers in battle leave their ranks, run away and then raise these false issues. The political leaders dare not lay the blame where it belongs. They, like the volunteer officers, are afraid of the men, but I will speak the truth and I believe still there are honest men enough to believe me. In the 302 dead, and 1,200 wounded of my division, there was not a bayonet or knife wound, and the story of men being bayoneted in their tents is a pure lie, and even admitting that officers and men had not dressed at  $7\frac{3}{4}$  A. M., I say they deserved it. Reveille is at  $5\frac{1}{2}$ . They should

have dressed then, and if they were too lazy to get up and dress before 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  they deserved to be bayoneted; but it is all a lie got up by the cowards who ran to the river and reported we were surprised and all killed. By their false reports they may have prevented success coming to us earlier than it did.

"The enemy treated our wounded well and kindly. I sent Willy a box of cannon balls and bullets which he must share with Tom. I would like to see Willy's eyes when he sees the dread missiles. I know the enemy is still in our front. They can surprise us tomorrow morning quite as well as they did us that Sunday, but in attacking us they made a mistake. We must attack them on their chosen ground. The next battle will be worse than the last, and, of course, I don't expect to survive all that follow. This gives me little trouble, but I do feel for the thousands that think another battle will end the war. I hope the war won't end until those who caused the war, the politicians and editors, are made to feel it. The scoundrels take good care of their hides, run up after a fight and back again before there is a chance for another. . . ."

Sherman's resentment against those who blamed Grant for the loss of life at Shiloh broke forth three days later (April 27) in a letter to his father-in-law, Thomas Ewing. "We all knew," he wrote, "we were assembling a vast army for an aggressive purpose. The President knew it. Halleck knew it, and the whole country knew it, and the attempt to throw blame on Grant is villainous. The fact is, if newspapers are to be our

government, I confess I would prefer Bragg, Beauregard or anybody as my ruler, and I will persist in my determination never to be a leader responsible to such a power." At the end of this letter Sherman strikes a new note of confidence, natural enough as his powers were unfolding themselves: "I am not in search of glory or fame, for I know I can take what position I choose among my peers."

On the 26th of May Sherman wrote from the camp before Corinth: "I received today the commission of Major General, but, I know not why, it gives me far less emotion than my old commission as 1st Lieutenant of Artillery. The latter, I know, I merited; this I doubt, but its possession completes the chain from cadet up, and will remain among the family archives when you and I repose in eternity." The dreaded collision at Corinth between the Northern and Southern armies, to the prospect of which the rest of the letter is devoted, was averted by the evacuation of the town by the Confederates. Sherman was immediately ordered to retrieve and repair some of the destructions of Beauregard's departure, and in a long letter from "Camp at Chewalla, 10 miles N. West of Corinth" (June 6, 1862), reverted with vigor to the themes of Grant and the press:

"DAYLIGHT, *June 6, 1862.*

" . . . I get nearly all or all the papers here somehow or other, and have seen most of the pieces you have clipped out, but I had not seen that of your father from the *Louisville Journal* signed E. It is sufficiently complimentary, more so than I merit, from such a high



source, and the illustration of the fable of the warrior's fight with the mud turtles is very strong and like your father. I will get even with the miserable class of corrupt editors yet. They are the chief cause of this unhappy war. They fan the flames of local hatred and keep alive those prejudices which have forced friends into opposing hostile ranks. At the North and South each radical class keeps its votaries filled with the most outrageous lies of the other. In the North the people have been made to believe that those of the South are horrid barbarians, unworthy a Christian burial, whilst at the South the people have been made to believe that we wanted to steal their negroes, rob them of their property, pollute their families, and to reduce the whites below the level of their own negroes. Worse than this at the North, no sooner does an officer rise from the common level, but some rival uses the press to malign him, destroy his usefulness, and pull him back to obscurity or infamy. Thus it was with me, and now they have nearly succeeded with Grant. He is as brave as any man should be, he has won several victories such as Donelson which ought to entitle him to universal praise, but his rivals have almost succeeded through the instrumentality of the press in pulling him down, and many thousands of families will be taught to look to him as the cause of the death of their fathers, husbands and brothers.

“The very object of war is to produce results by death and slaughter, but the moment a battle occurs the newspapers make the leader responsible for the death and misery, whether of victory or defeat. If this be pushed much further officers of modesty and merit will keep

away, will draw back into obscurity and leave our armies to be led by fools or rash men, such as ———. Grant had made up his mind to go home, I tried to dissuade him, but so fixed was he in his purpose that I thought his mind was made up and asked for his escort a company of 4th Illinois. But last night I got a note from him saying he would stay.<sup>1</sup> His case is a good illustration of my meaning.

“He is not a brilliant man and has, himself, thoughtlessly used the press to give him *éclat* in Illinois, but he is a good and brave soldier, tried for years; is sober, very industrious and as kind as a child. Yet he has been held up as careless, criminal, a drunkard, tyrant and everything horrible. Very many of our officers, knowing how powerful is public opinion in our government have kept newspaper correspondents near their persons to praise them in their country papers; but so intense is public curiosity that several times flattery designed for one county has reached others, and been published to the world, making their little heroes big fools. It had become so bad—and the evil is not yet eradicated—that no sooner was a battle fought than every colonel and captain was the hero of the fight. Thus at Shiloh, for a month, all through Illinois and Missouri a newspaper reader would have supposed McClelland and Lew Wallace were away ahead of my division, whereas the former was directly behind me, and the other at Crump’s Landing. Again, at Corinth you will hear of five hundred first men inside the works. Let them scramble for the dead lion’s paw. It is a barren honor not worth

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, I, 283.

contending for. If these examples and a few more will convince the real substantial men of our country that the press is not even an honest exponent of the claims of men pretending to serve their country, but the base means of building up spurious fame and pulling down honest merit, I feel that I have my full reward in being one of the first to see it and suffer the consequences. . . .”

From July till the middle of November Sherman was in Memphis, building fortifications and dealing with many problems connected with the occupation of the place by Union troops. The letters of this time deal with no events of the first importance, yet they contain passages of general interest touching the progress of the war.

“MEMPHIS, *July 31, 1862.*

“. . . As to freeing the negroes, I don't think the time is come yet. When negroes are liberated either they or masters must perish. They cannot exist together except in their present relation, and to expect negroes to change from slaves to masters without one of those horrible convulsions which at times startle the world is absurd. The war this fall and winter will be very bloody, and the South will get the advantage. They now have the advantage in numbers and position. They are concentrated and we scattered. They were nearly out of bacon and salt meat, but the desire of our people to trade has soon supplied this. Cincinnati has sent enough salt to supply all their army for six months. In like manner the Jews and speculators have sent in

enough gold to get all the cartridges necessary, so the two wants of the army are supplied, a whole year lost to the war, and some Jews and speculators have made ten per cent profit. Of course our lives are nothing in the scales of profit with our commercial people. The buying of cotton by the people of the South was one act of folly, but our buying the refuse of them for gold and especially shipping salt, which from scarcity has risen to \$100 a barrel, is a greater act of folly. I have stopped it instantaneously on reaching the river, but the thing is going on all round me, by consent of the Board of Trade of Cincinnati, Louisville, etc. I am getting tired of this, and of the volunteer service, and would escape if I could. . . .

"Our camp is a pleasant one, ground enough, but contracted, Secesh on both sides and all round. The idea of making them take the oath is absurd. Of course I know, and everybody knows, they prefer the South to the North, and that they hope and pray that the Southern army will in due time destroy us. I go on the theory that all the leading men are Secesh and the laborers and mechanics neutral or tired of war. . . . We are in our enemy's country and I act accordingly. The North may fall into bankruptcy and anarchy first, but if they can hold on the war will soon assume a turn to extermination, not of soldiers alone, that is the least part of the trouble, but the people."

"MEMPHIS, *August 10, 1862.*

". . . The fact is we are fast approaching a state of war and if soon we don't awake to the dream we will find ourselves involved in war. Thus far it has been

by-play, and whilst the whole South is in deep intense earnest we of the north still try reconciliation, etc. I am putting the screws to some, but find more trouble in combatting the North whose merchants and traders think they have a right to make money out of the present state of things, and Memphis was on my arrival fast becoming a depot of supplies for the hostile army in the interior.

“If Mr. Lincoln had accepted the fact of war on the start and raised his army, as I then advised, of a million of men, the South would have seen they had aroused a lion. Whereas by temporizing expedients, first 75,000, then ten new regiments, then half a million, etc., they find it necessary again and again to increase the call. Well, at last I hope the fact is clear to their minds that if the North design to conquer the South, we must begin at Kentucky and reconquer the country from there as we did from the Indians. It was this conviction then as plainly as now that made men think I was insane. A good many flatterers now want to make me a prophet. . . .”

“MEMPHIS, *August* 20, 1862.

“. . . I see the Cincinnati papers are finding fault with me again. Well, thank God, I don't owe Cincinnati anything, or she me. If they want to believe reporters they may. Eliza Gillespie can tell you whether I take an interest in the sick or no. I never said I did not want cowards from the hospital. I said the Sanitary Committee had carried off thousands who were not sick, except of the war, and for my part I did not want such to

return. Men who ran off at Shiloh and escaped in boats to Ohio and remain absent as deserters will be of no use to us here. This is true and those deserters should know it; but the real sick receive from me all possible care. I keep my sick with their regiments, with their comrades, and don't send them to strange hospitals. Our surgeon has a very bad way of getting rid of sick instead of taking care of them in their regiments, and once in the general hospitals they rarely return. This cause nearly defeated us at Shiloh, when 57,000 men were absent from their regiment *without leave*. McClellan has 70,000 absent from his army. This abuse has led to many catastrophes, and you can't pick up a paper without some order of the President and Secretary of War on the subject.

"If the doctors want to do charity let them come here, where the sick are, and not ask us to send the sick to them. As to opening the liquor saloons here, it was done by the city authorities to prevent the sale of whiskey by the smugglers. We have as little drunkenness and as good order here as in any part of the volunteer army.

"Cincinnati furnishes more contraband goods than Charleston, and has done more to prolong the war than the State of South Carolina. Not a merchant there but would sell salt, bacon, powder and lead, if they can make money by it. I have partially stopped this and hear their complaints. I hope Bragg will bring war home to them. The cause of war is not alone in the nigger, but in the mercenary spirit of our countrymen."



"MEMPHIS, *September 12, 1862.*

". . . My predictions of last fall are not much wide of the truth now. The southern leaders don't wait till the time comes, they prepare beforehand. The whole of last year has been consumed by them in preparation, and now they have a larger army and as well armed as we have. I still don't see the issue of events, but surely we must do more than brag or else the South will carry the war into Africa. I see the people have made a clear sacrifice of Pope and McDowell, and are now content with having killed two of their own generals. This is a glorious war! With thousands of armed enemies now in the loyal states of Kentucky and Maryland the people are content to kill Pope and McDowell. Well, it may be all right, but I would advise a different course. Instead of thinking of us away to the front, they think of themselves. . . ."

## VIII

### VICKSBURG

1863

WHEN the autumn of 1862 was well advanced, Mrs. Sherman and the children came to Memphis for a visit. About the middle of November Sherman was summoned to a meeting with Grant in Columbus, Kentucky, where they discussed the first movement towards the taking of Vicksburg. In December Sherman set out upon an unavailing attempt to capture the stronghold in co-operation with Admiral Porter. This failure was followed immediately by the success at Arkansas Post, one of the early moves in the deadly game of wresting Vicksburg from the Confederate army. To this purpose a little more than the first six months of 1863 was devoted. It was a period of constant struggle, not only with the enemy, but with the great ally of whichever side could control it, the Mississippi River. The final overthrow of Vicksburg was for Sherman, as we shall see, "the first gleam of daylight in this war." It marked a definite period of Sherman's own development, and with the letter written on the day after the capitulation, the present chapter will end.

"ON BOARD *Forest Queen*,

"MILLIKEN'S BEND, *January 4, 1863.*

"Well, we have been to Vicksburg and it was too much for us, and we have backed out. I suppose the attack on Holly Springs and the railroad compelled Grant to fall behind the Tallahatchie, and consequently the Confederates were enabled to reinforce Vicksburg. Besides, its natural strength had been improved by a vast amount of labor, so that it was impossible for me to capture or even to penetrate to the road from which alone I could expect to take it. For five days we were thundering away, and when my main assault failed, and Admiral Porter deemed another requiring the cooperation of the gunboats 'too hazardous,' I saw no alternative but to regain my steamboats and the main river, which I did unopposed and unmolested. To reembark a large command in the face of an enterprising and successful enemy is no easy task, but I accomplished it. McClernand has arrived to supersede me by order of the President himself.<sup>1</sup> Of course I submit gracefully. The President is charged with maintaining the government and has a perfect right to choose his agents. My command is to be an army corps composed of Morgan L. Smith's old command (poor Morgan now lies wounded badly in the hip on board the *Chancellor*, and

<sup>1</sup> On January 2, Sherman had learned that McClernand had "orders from the War Department to command the expeditionary force on the Mississippi River" (*Memoirs*, I, 322). On January 24, Sherman wrote to his wife: "It was simply absurd to supersede me by McClernand, but Mr. Lincoln knows I am not anxious to command, and he knows McClernand is, and must gratify him. He will get his fill before he is done."

his division is commanded by Stuart), and the troops I got at Helena commanded by Fred Steele whom I know well. These are all new and strange to me but such is life and luck. Before I withdrew from the Yazoo I saw McClernand and told him that we had failed to carry the enemy's line of works before Vicksburg, but I could hold my ground at Yazoo—but it would be useless. He promptly confirmed my judgment that it was best to come out into the main river at Milliken's Bend. We did so day before yesterday, and it has rained hard two days and I am satisfied that we got out of the Swamp at Chickasaw Bayou in time, for now water and mud must be forty feet deep there. . . . Regulars did well, of course, but they or no human beings could have crossed the bayou and live. People at a distance will ridicule our being unable to pass a narrow bayou, but nobody who was there will. Instead of lying idle I proposed we should come to the Arkansas and attack the Post of Arkansas, fifty miles up that river, from which the enemy has attacked the river capturing one of our boats, towing two barges of navy coal and capturing a mail, so I have no doubt some curious lieutenant has read your letters to me. We must make the river safe behind us before we push too far down. We are now on our way to the Post of Arkansas. McClernand assumed command to-day, so I will not be care-worn again by the duty of looking to supplies, plans, etc. . . . It will in the end cost us at least ten thousand lives to take Vicksburg. I would have pushed the attack to the bitter end, but even had we reached the city unassisted we

could not have held it if they are at liberty to reinforce from the interior. . . .”

“POST OF ARKANSAS, *January 12, 1863.*

“We carried the Post of Arkansas yesterday and captured all its stores and garrison, and Brigadier-General Churchill, and three brigades of soldiers, I cannot tell yet how many. They now stand clustering on the bank, and will today be put on board of boats and sent to Cairo. This relieves our Vicksburg trip of all appearances of a reverse, as by this move we open the Arkansas and compel all organized masses of the enemy to pass below the Arkansas River, and it will also secure this flank when we renew our attack on Vicksburg. . . .”

“CAMP NEAR VICKSBURG, *January 28, 1863.*

“. . . The politician thinks results can be had by breath, but how painfully it begins to come home to the American people that the war which all have striven so hard to bring on and so few to avert is to cost us so many thousands of lives. Indeed do I wish I had been killed long since. Better that than struggle with the curses and maledictions of every woman that has a son or brother to die in any army with which I chance to be associated. Of course Sherman is responsible. Seeing so clearly into the future I do think I ought to get away. The President's placing McClernand here and the dead set to ruin me for McClernand's personal glory would afford me a good chance to slide out and escape the storm and trouble yet in reserve for us. Here we are at Vicksburg on the wrong side of the river trying to

turn the Mississippi by a ditch, a pure waste of human labor. Grant has come and Prime<sup>1</sup> is here and they can figure it out, but the canal won't do. We must carry out the plan fixed up at Oxford. A large army must march down from Oxford to Grenada and so on to the rear of Vicksburg, and another army must be here to coöperate with the gun-boats at the right time. Had Grant been within sixty miles of Vicksburg, or Banks near, I could have broken the line of Chickasaw Bayou, but it was never dreamed by me that I could take the place alone. McClernand or Grant will not undertake it. Not a word of Banks. I doubt if he has left or can leave or has any order to leave New Orleans. Therefore here we are to sit in the mud till spring and summer and maybe another year. Soldiers will soon clamor for motion, life, anything rather than canal digging. The newspapers are after me again; I published an order they must not come along on pain of being treated as spies. I am now determined to test the question. Do they rule or the commanding general? If they rule I quit. I have ordered the arrest of one, shall try him, and if possible execute him as a spy. They publish all the data for our enemy and it was only by absolute secrecy that we could get to the Post of Arkansas without their getting ahead. They did reveal our attempt to attack Haines's Bluff. I will never again command an army in America if we must carry along paid spies. I will banish myself to some foreign country first. I shall notify Mr. Lincoln of this if he attempt to interfere with the sentence of any court

<sup>1</sup> Captain Prime of the Engineer Corps.



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ordered by me. If he wants an army he must conform to the well established rules of military nations and not attempt to keep up the open rules of peace. The South at the start did these things, and the result has been, they move their forces from Virginia to Mississippi and back without a breath spoken or written. . . ."

"CAMP NEAR VICKSBURG,  
"February 22, 1863.

". . . As to my exposing myself unnecessarily, you need not be concerned. I know better than C— where danger lies and where I should be. Soldiers have a right to see and know that the man who guides them is near enough to see with his own eyes, and that he cannot see without being seen. At Arkansas Post the ground was nearly level and the enemy could see me, with officers coming and going and orderlies grouped near. Of course they fired at me, one rifled 10 pounder repeatedly, and when I was grouping the prisoners I recognized the very gun and asked for the gunner, who proved to be a real Paddy, and I gave him fits for aiming at me, which the fellow did not deny; but we gave them a fair return and the account was squared. . . ."

"CAMP NEAR VICKSBURG, February 26, 1863.

"I have yours of the 14th inst. and indeed I think all your letters have come somewhat in bunches, but I think all are at hand up to that of the 14th. Of course, I will heed your counsel about the newspaper correspondents, but it is hard for me to know that they are

used to spy out and report all our acts of omission and commission to be published at home to prejudice the cause and advance that of the enemy. It is hard enough to know that we have a strong well organized and vindictive enemy in front and a more dangerous insidious one within our very camp. These causes must defeat us unless the people have resources enough to learn by the slow and sad progress of time what they might so much easier learn from books or the example of our enemy. We look in vain to their newspapers for scraps from which to guess at the disposition of their forces, and know and feel all the time that every thing we do or attempt to do is paraded in all our newspapers which reach Vicksburg by telegraph from Richmond, Va. or Memphis long before we are ourselves advised. I feel also that our government instead of governing the country is led first by one class of newspapers, then another, and that we are the mere shuttle-cocks flying between. We get all the knocks and rarely see one grain of encouragement from 'home.' I see the eulogies of the brave and heroic acts of men at Springfield, Illinois, and Cincinnati, and rarely anything but the paid and hired encomiums of some worthless regiment here, that, understanding the notions of our people, can get cheap reputation by writing for the press, and neglecting all their duties here. The further we penetrate, the further we remain from home, the less we are esteemed or encouraged. I did not intend to resign unless the public opinion of the North made it prudent for the President to recall me nominally to some other command, or unless I detected in my own corps some symptoms of

the natural results of the continued attacks of the press. In either event being foot-loose I would be justified before God and man in making my own choice of vocation. My old troops believe in me, but in this move I had a new batch that did not know me and I had reason to apprehend mistrust on this point, as some of them are known to me, like —, to be mere politicians who come to fight not for the real glory and success of the nation but for their own individual aggrandizement. Let any accident befall me or any temporary rumor like that at Vicksburg, the same howl will be renewed because these buzzards of the press who hang in scent about our camps know full well that death awaits them whenever I have the power or when time develops their true character and influence. You in Ohio have one or two papers to conciliate, here we have all—St. Louis, Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, Charleston, Atlanta and Vicksburg. Now these are all antagonistic save in one particular, in *esprit de corps*. They stand by each other as a profession, but each gathers facts and draws its pictures to suit the home market, and really the Southern correspondents are the more fair. Were I to judge of public opinion by the tone of the press I would say we were here regarded as an enemy to the North and rather favorable to the South. Of course, I shall no longer attempt to exclude spies from camp, and allow these to come and go freely and collect their own budgets. The ram *Queen of the West* was captured by the enemy in Red River and yesterday came close up to Vicksburg with the Rebel flag flying in defiance. We have an iron boat below, the *Indianola*,

but night before last heavy firing was heard until about one o'clock, when it ceased, and this fact being followed by the appearance of the captured ram looks bad. I fear the *Indianola* is gone, and that the enemy has recovered the use of the river below Vicksburg. This to us is a bad blow, and may lead to worse consequences. I at once established a battery of 20 pound rifles below the town and made other dispositions, but the ram has again gone below. I fear for the safety of the *Indianola*. If sunk it is not so bad, but if like the *Queen of the West* she has fallen into the hands of the enemy, it may prove a calamity. Rain, rain,—water above, below and all round. I have been soused under water by my horse falling in a hole, and got a good ducking yesterday walking where a horse could not go. No doubt they are chuckling over our helpless situation in Vicksburg. Accounts from Yazoo and Providence Lake favorable, but rain, rain, and men can't work—indeed hardly a place to stand, much less lie down. . . .”

“CAMP BEFORE VICKSBURG,

“*March 13, 1863.*

“. . . The waters are still rising and Kilby Smith's Brigade is roosting on the levee with bare standing room. McClernand's Corps is at Milliken's Bend, and my Corps strung along the levee for four miles. The levee is about ten feet wide at top with sloping sides and can hold all the men and maybe horses in case of an absolute flood. We have not steamboats enough to float us and if we had there is no dry land to go to. An expedition has entered the Yazoo from above, and

when it is heard from we probably will make another dash at Vicksburg or Drumgould's. I see the whole North is again in agonies about the amount of sickness down here. It is not excessively hot, more than should be expected, not more than we had on the Potomac and Tennessee, and our supplies are the best I ever saw. There is a deep laid plan to cripple us laid by Jeff Davis who is smart and knows our people well. By a few thousands of dollars well invested in newspapers he can defeat any plan or undertaking. Many really well disposed men have come from St. Louis, Cincinnati and Washington and have been amazed by the falsehood of these stories. Only one man of the regulars has died since we left Memphis. My old regiments are all in fine health and spirits. Some of the new regiments have passed through the ordeal which afflicts all new troops. . . .

"The War Department have not given me any staff, and yet have taken from me the right to appoint any. The truth is now as it always was, that persons at a distance are neglected and those near the seat of power petted. We have made further progress than any army, with less means. In Vicksburg we meet our match and time must solve the difficulty; but so long as our camps are full of newspaper spies revealing each move, exaggerating our trouble and difficulties and giving grounds for discontent, success cannot be expected.

"The new Conscript Law is the best act of our government and Mr. Lincoln can no longer complain of want of power. He now is absolute dictator and if he don't use the power some one will. . . ."

"CAMP BEFORE VICKSBURG, *March 30, 1863.*

"I got back from an excursion up to Deer Creek in connection with Admiral Porter the day before yesterday, and being on General Grant's boat which lies about four miles above me I wrote you a hasty note saying we were all well. I don't know what the people and press will make of this move, but I explain it to you. Our difficulty at Vicksburg has been to get a foothold on hard ground on that side of the Mississippi. We have endeavored to get east of the Yazoo without success by every possible channel, and Admiral Porter and General Grant thought they had discovered a new route up Yazoo and Steele's Bayou to Black Fork across into Deer Creek, up Deer Creek to Rolling Fork and then into Sunflower and Yazoo. I don't know if your maps show this route, but there is a channel during high water. Grant accompanied the Admiral up a short distance returned and ordered me to follow, to reconnoitre, to ascertain if the route was feasible to move my Corps. I got one of the Admiral's little tugs and with only two aids, Col. Johnson and Lt. Pitzman and my orderly Boyer, pushed up and overtook the Admiral in Black Bayou. I took no troops with me, but had ordered the 8th Missouri and some pioneers to go up in a steamboat to clear out trees and overhanging branches. I saw very soon that the channel was too narrow and obstructed by trees to be passable without a vast amount of clearing, and soon reported that it would not do, but the Admiral pushed up Deer Creek with his iron-clads. He had not proceeded twenty miles before the channel became so obstructed that he doubted his ability to pro-



ceed, and the enemy had detected the move and had begun to fell trees across the channel. At last he called on me for help; and having brought up three small regiments I sent them forward and worked like a beaver to get up more. I succeeded in getting up the better part of two brigades and afoot started for the fleet. I got there not a minute too soon. The enemy were swarming about the fleet, had chopped down trees in front and were in the act of doing the same below so as to block them in. There were five iron-clads and three little tenders or tugs. Their heavy guns could not contend with the rifle men who behind trees and logs picked off every man who showed his head. I do believe if I had not labored as I did, and moved as rapidly, the enemy would have got the boats and the tables would have been turned on us here at Vicksburg; but the Admiral had actually resolved to blow them all up. The mud and rain were terrific, but I marched afoot and the men were tickled to see me there; and such cheers as the gun-boats put up when they saw General Sherman! Of course we soon cleared the ground, and not a shot was fired at the gun-boats after I got there. For four days and nights they were beset by a crowd of guerrillas and soldiers and could not sleep or rest; it was the lion in a net.

“The admiral was in the act of backing out when I got to him, and his judgment was that the route was impracticable. Of course, we gradually withdrew slowly and leisurely, and the enemy followed us at a distance. No place on earth is favored by nature with natural defense such as Vicksburg, and I do believe the whole thing will fail and we will have to go back to the

original plan, viz: the main army to move by land from Memphis, Oxford, Grenada to Yazoo City and Vicksburg, whilst a smaller force hem in the river and attack in flank contemporaneous with the arrival of the main army. This was the original plan and the only one certain of success. Grant may resolve to attack Haines' Bluff, but we cannot bring our whole force to bear there. The river does not admit of it. . . ."

"CAMP AT VICKSBURG, *April 10, 1863.*

". . . I was really amused at a circumstance to-day that may be serious. Grant has been *secretly* working by night to place some 30 pound rifle guns as close up to Vicksburg as the water will permit, about 2,300 yards, and to cover them against the enemies' cross batteries, but to-day got the Memphis papers of the 7th giving a minute and full account of them and their location. Now he knows as we all do that the Secesh mail leaves Memphis before day, as soon as the morning papers are printed, reaches Hernando about 11 A. M., and the telegraph carries to Vicksburg the news in a few minutes. This explains a remark which Major Watts of the Confederate Army made to me at parting day before yesterday. We met per appointment on a steamboat just above Vicksburg, and after a long conference relating to exchange of prisoners, Watts, who is a very clever man, remarked: 'don't open those batteries to-morrow (last) night, for I am to give a party and don't want to be interrupted.' Of course the newspaper correspondents, encouraged by the political generals and even President Lincoln, having full swing in this and all camps, report

all news secret and otherwise. Indeed with a gossiping world a secret is worth more than common news. Grant was furious, and I believe he ordered the suppression of all the Memphis papers. But that won't do. All persons who don't have to fight must be kept out of camp, else secrecy, a great element of military success, is an impossibility. I may not, but you will live to see the day when the people of the United States will mob the man who thinks otherwise. I am too fast, but there are principles of government as sure to result from war as in law, religion or any moral science. Some prefer to jump to the conclusion by reason. Others prefer to follow developments by the slower and surer road of experience. In like manner Grant has three thousand men at work daily to clear out Willow Bayou, by which he proposes to move a large part of the army to Carthage and Grand Gulf: also a secret, but I'll bet my life it is at this moment in all the Northern papers, and is known through them to the Secesh from Richmond to Vicksburg. Can you feel astonished that I should grow angry at the toleration of such suicidal weakness, that we strong, intelligent men must bend to a silly proclivity for early news that should advise our enemy days in advance? Look out! We are not going to attack Haines' Bluff or Greenwood or Vicksburg direct, but are going to come round below by Grand Gulf! All the enemy wants is a day or two notice of such intention and Grand Gulf becomes like a second Vicksburg! But this is a secret, remember, and though it is the plan it is not a good plan. We commit a great mistake, but I am not going to advise one way or the other. The govern-

ment has here plenty of representatives, and they must make the plans, and I will fill my part, no more, no less.

"The only true plan was the one we started with. The Grand Army should be on the main land moving south along the road and roads from Memphis, Holly Springs and Corinth, concentrating on Grenada; thence towards Canton where the Central Road crosses Big Black and then on Vicksburg. The gun-boats and a small army should be here, and on the first sign of the presence of the main force inland we should attack here violently.

"This was our plan at Oxford in December last, is my plan now and Grant knows it is my opinion. I shall communicate it to none else save you or your father. . . . It is my opinion that we shall never take Vicksburg by operations by river alone.

"The armies on the Rappahannock and in Kentucky pause for us at Vicksburg. That is folly; all ought to press at the same instant, for the enemy has the centre or inside track, can concentrate on any one point and return to the others in time. Their position is very strong, and they have skill, courage and intelligence enough to avail themselves of all advantages. Their country is suffering terribly by the devastations of our armies and the escapes of their slaves, but nothing seems to shake their constancy or confidence in ultimate success. Could the North only turn out her strength, fill promptly our thinned ranks, keep their counsels, hold their tongues, and stop their infernal pens and press we could make things crash, and either submission or utter horrible ruin would be their fate.

"It may be, however, that God in his wisdom wants to take down the conceit of our people and make them feel that they are of the same frail materials of mortality as the other thousand millions of human beings that spin their short webs and die all over earth. In all former wars virtues lost sight of in time of peace have revived, and to any one who looked it is unnecessary to say that our governments, national, state, county and town, had been corrupt, foul and disgraceful. If war will change this, it will be cheaply bought. . . .

"The last flag of truce brought me from Vicksburg a beautiful bouquet with compliments of Major Hoadley and Major Watts, the same who wanted me not to fire last night to interrupt his party. The trees are now in full leaf, the black and blue-birds sing sweetly, and the mocking bird is frantic with joy. The rose and violet, the beds of verbena and mignonette, planted by fair hands now in exile from their homes occupied by the rude barbarian, bloom as fair as though grim war had not torn with violent hands all the vestiges of what a few short months ago were the homes of people as good as ourselves. You may well pray that a good God in His mercy will spare the home of your youth the tread of an hostile army. . . ."

"CAMP OPPOSITE VICKSBURG, *April* 17, 1863.

". . . I have never been considered the advocate of McClellan or anybody. I have often said that McClellan's reputation as a scholar and soldier was second to none after Mexico. I heard Gen. Persifor F. Smith in 1849 pronounce him better qualified to command than



any of our then generals. I remember once when we were riding along and talking of certain events in Mexico he named some half dozen young officers who he thought should at once be pushed forward, and McClellan was the first in order after Lee. I admit the right and duty of Mr. Lincoln to select his own agents and when one displeases him there can be no accord, and he should set him aside. He is *ex necessitate* to that extent king and can do no wrong. At all events everybody must and should submit with good grace. But knowing the very common clay out of which many of our new generals are made I have trembled at any shifting of commanders until the army feel assured that a change is necessary. I know Hooker well and tremble to think of his handling 100,000 men in the presence of Lee. I don't think Lee will attack Hooker in position because he will doubt if it will pay, but let Hooker once advance or move laterally and I fear for the result. . . .

"Here we have begun a move that is one of the most dangerous in war. Last night our gun-boats, seven of the largest, ran the blockade and are below Vicksburg. They suffered comparatively little. Three transports followed, one of which was fired and burned to the water's edge. The *Silver Wave* passed unhurt and my old boat the *Forest Queen* had one shot in her hull and one through a steam pipe, which disabled her. She is below Vicksburg and above Warrenton and is being repaired.

"McClelland's Corps has marched along the margin of an intricate bayou forty-seven miles to New Carthage, and the plan is to take and hold Grand Gulf, and make



it the base of a movement in rear of Vicksburg. I don't like the project for several reasons. The channel by which provisions, stores, ammunition, etc., are to be conveyed to Carthage is a narrow crooked bayou with plenty of water now, but in two months will dry up. No boat has yet entered it, and though four steam dredges are employed in cutting a canal into it I doubt if it can be available in ten days. The road used is pure alluvium and three hours' rain will make it a quagmire over which a wagon could no more pass than in the channel of the Mississippi.

"Now the amount of provisions, forage and more especially coal used by an army and fleet such as we will have, will overtax the capacity of the canal.

"Again we know the enemy has up the Yazoo some of the finest boats that ever navigated the Mississippi, with plenty of cotton to barricade them and convert them into formidable rams. Knowing now as they well do that our best ironclads are below Vicksburg, and that it is one thing to run down stream and very different up, they can simply swop. They can let us have the reach below Vicksburg and they take the one above, and in the exchange they get decidedly the best of the bargain. To accomplish such a move successfully we should have at least double their force, whereas we know that our effective force is but little if any superior to theirs. They can now use all the scattered bands in Louisiana to threaten this narrow long canal and force us to guard it, so that the main army beyond will be unequal to a march inland from Grand Gulf. We could undertake, and safely, to hold the

river and allow the gun-boat fleet to go to Port Hudson and assist in the reduction of that place so that all could unite against Vicksburg. I have written and explained to Grant all these points, but the clamor is so great he fears to seem to give up the attack on Vicksburg. My opinion is we should now feint on the river and hasten to Grenada by any available road, and then move in great force south, parallel with the river, leaving the gun-boats and a comparatively small force here. Grant, however, trembles at the approaching thunders of popular criticism and must risk anything, and it is my duty to back him though the contemplated and partially executed move does not comport with my ideas. I know the pictorials will give flaming pictures of the successful running the batteries of Vicksburg, but who thinks of their getting back? What will be thought if some ten large cotton freighted boats come out of Yazoo and put all our transports to the bottom and have us on the narrow margin of a great and turbid stream? The fear of public clamor is more degrading to the mind than a just measure of the dangers of battle with an open fair enemy in equal or even unequal fight. Hugh and Charley<sup>1</sup> were with me last night at the picket station below Vicksburg and saw the cannonading, and will describe its appearance better than I could. I can't help but overlook the present and look ahead. I wish the enemy would commit this mistake with us, but no, they are too cunning. General Thomas is here raising negro brigades. I would prefer to have this a white man's war and provide for the negroes after the time

<sup>1</sup> Brothers of Mrs. Sherman.

has passed, but we are in a revolution and I must not pretend to judge. With my opinions of negroes and my experience, yea prejudice, I cannot trust them yet. Time may change this but I cannot bring 'myself to trust negroes with arms in positions of danger and trust. . . ."

"CAMP BEFORE VICKSBURG, *April 23, 1863.*

"Last night another batch of transports were prepared to run Vicksburg batteries. In order to afford assistance to the unfortunate I crossed over through the submerged swamp with eight yawls, and was in the Mississippi about four miles below Vicksburg and three above Warrenton. The first boat to arrive was the *Tigress*, a fast side-wheel boat which was riddled with shot and repeatedly struck in the hull. She rounded to, tied to the bank and sunk a wreck; all hands saved. The next was the *Empire City*, also crippled but afloat, then the *Cheeseman* that was partially disabled, then the *Anglo-Saxon* and *Moderator*, both of which were so disabled that they drifted down stream catching the Warrenton batteries as they passed. The *Horizon* was the sixth and last, passed down about daylight. The *Cheeseman* took the *Empire City* in tow and went down just after day, catching thunder from the Warrenton batteries. Five of the six boats succeeded in getting by, all bound for Carthage, where they are designed to carry troops to Grand Gulf and some other point across the Mississippi. This is a desperate and terrible thing, floating by terrific batteries without the power of replying. Two men were mortally wounded and many

lacerated and torn, but we could not ascertain the full extent of damage for we were trying to hurry them past the lower or Warrenton batteries before daylight. The only way to go to Carthage is by a bayou road from Milliken's Bend, and over that narrow road our army is to pass below Vicksburg, and by means of these boats pass on to the east side of the Mississippi. I look upon the whole thing as one of the most hazardous and desperate moves of this or any war. A narrow difficult road, liable by a shower to become a quagmire. A canal is being dug on whose success the coal for steamers, provisions for men and forage for animals must all be transported. McClernand's Corps has moved down. McPherson will follow, and mine comes last. I don't object to this, for I have no faith in the whole plan.

"Politicians and all sorts of influences are brought to bear on Grant to do something. Hooker remains *statu quo*. Rosecrans is also at a deadlock, and we who are now six hundred miles [ahead] of any are being pushed to a most perilous and hazardous enterprise.

"I did think our government would learn something by experience if not by reason. An order is received to-day from Washington to consolidate the old regiments. All regiments below 500, embracing all the old regiments which have been depleted by death and all sorts of causes, are to be reduced to battalions of five companies in each regiment; the colonel and major and one assistant-sergeant to be mustered out, and all the officers, sergeants and corporals of five companies to be discharged. This will soon take all my colonels, Kilby Smith, Giles Smith, and hundreds of our best

captains, lieutenants and sergeants and corporals. Instead of drafting and filling up with privates, one half of the officers are to be discharged, and the privates squeezed into battalions. If the worst enemy of the United States were to devise a plan to break down our army, a better one could not be attempted. Two years have been spent in educating colonels, captains, sergeants and corporals, and now they are to be driven out of service at the very beginning of the campaign in order that governors may have a due proportion of officers for the drafted men. I do regard this as one of the fatal mistakes of this war. It is worse than a defeat. It is the absolute giving up of the chief advantage of two years' work. I don't know if you understand it, but believe you do. The order is positive and must be executed. It is now too late to help it, but I have postponed its execution for a few days to see if Grant won't suspend its operation till this move is made. All the old politician colonels have been weeded out by the progress of the war, and now that we begin to have some officers who do know something they must be discharged because the regiments have dwindled below one half the legal standard. We all know the President was empowered to do this, but took it for granted that he would fill up the ranks by a draft and leave us the services of the men who are now ready to drill and instruct them as soldiers. Last fall the same thing was done, that is new regiments were received instead of filling up the old ones, and the consequence was those new regiments have filled our hospitals and depots, and now again the same thing is to be repeated. It may be the

whole war will be turned over to the negroes, and I begin to believe they will do as well as Lincoln and his advisers. I cannot imagine what Halleck is about. We have Thomas and Dana both here from Washington, no doubt impressing on Grant the necessity of achieving something brilliant. It is the same old Bull Run mania, but why should other armies be passive and ours pushed to destruction?

Prime is here and agrees with me; but we must drift on with events. We are excellent friends. Indeed, I am on the best of terms with everybody, but I avoid McClelland because I know he is envious and jealous of everybody who stands in his way. . . . He now has the lead. Admiral Porter is there, and he is already calling 'For God's sake, send down some one.' He calls for me—Grant has gone himself—went this morning. I know they have got this fleet in a tight place, Vicksburg above and Port Hudson below, and how are they to get out? One or other of the gates must be stormed and carried, or else none. I tremble for the result. Of course, it is possible to land at Grand Gulf and move inland, but I doubt the capacity of any channel at our command equal to the conveyance of the supplies for this army. This army should not all be here. The great part should be at or near Grenada moving south by land. . . ."

"HEADQUARTERS 15 ARMY CORPS,

"BEFORE VICKSBURG, *April 29th*, 1863.

". . . He [Grant] is down at Carthage, the fleet is below Vicksburg, and I was on the point of following



when the order was countermanded; then I got an order that he would like to have a feint made on Haines' Bluff, provided I did not fear the people might style it a repulse. I wrote him to make his plans founded on as much good sense as possible and let the people mind their own business. He had ordered me to attack Vicksburg and I had done so. Now to divert attention from his movement against Grand Gulf he wants another demonstration up Yazoo. Of course I will make it and let the people find out when they can if it be a repulse or no. I suppose we must ask the people in the press, *i. e.* some half-dozen little whipsnappers who represent the press, but are in fact spies in our camp, too lazy, idle, and cowardly to be soldiers. These must be consulted before I can make a simulated attack on Haines' Bluff in aid to Grant and Porter that I know are in a tight place at Grand Gulf. Therefore prepare yourself for another blast against Sherman blundering and being repulsed at Haines' whilst McClernand charges gallantly ashore and carries Grand Gulf, etc. But when they take Grand Gulf they have the elephant by the tail. I say the whole plan is hazardous in the extreme, but I will do all I can to aid Grant. Should, as the papers now intimate, Grant be relieved and McClernand left in command you may expect to hear of me at St. Louis, for I will not serve under McClernand. . . . I start in an hour to make the demonstration up the Yazoo. I shall have ten regiments of infantry, two ironclads, the *Mohawk* and *De Kalb*, and a parcel of mosquitoes. I don't expect a fight, but a devil of noise to make believe and attract any troops in motion from Vicksburg

towards Grand Gulf back. I think Grant will make a safe lodgment at Grand Gulf, but the real trouble is and will be the maintenance of the army there. If the capture of Holly Springs made him leave the Tallahatchie, how much more precarious is his position now below Vicksburg with every pound of provision, forage and ammunition to float past the seven miles of batteries at Vicksburg or be hauled thirty-seven miles along a narrow boggy road. I will be up Yazoo about three days. . . . I am not concerned about the *Cincinnati Gazette*. The correspondent's insinuations against Grant and myself about cotton are ridiculous. Grant is honest as old Jack Taylor, and I am a cotton-burner. I have even forbidden all dealing in cotton and not an officer of my command ever owned a bale. As to myself, I would burn every parcel of it as the bone of contention and apple of discord. Now that Mr. Chase has undertaken to manage cotton as well as finance I wish him a good time with it. . . ."

"MILLIKEN'S BEND, *May 2*, 1863.

"As I wrote you on Wednesday, I went up Yazoo with two ironclad boats, four or five mosquitoes, or small stern wheel gun-boats, and ten transports carrying a part of Blair's division for the purpose of making a simulated attack on Haines' Bluff to divert attention from Grant's movements on Grand Gulf. The first night we spent at our old battle ground of Chickasaw Bayou, and next morning moved up in sight of the batteries on Drumgould's Hill. We battered away all

morning and the enemy gave us back as much as we sent. The leading gun-boat got fifty-three shots in her, but her men being in iron casemates were not hurt. A wooden boat had a shot through the engine room. I was in the *Black Hawk* which was a wooden boat with two thirty pound rifles on the bow. We kept up a brisk cannonade for about five hours and then hauled out of range. I then disembarked the men in full view and made all the usual demonstrations of attack and remained so till night when the men were recalled. Next morning we made renewed examination, and I had just given orders for a new cannonade when a messenger came up from Grant saying they had had hard work at Grand Gulf and were compelled to run below, but that he would land at Bayou Pierre and turn back on Vicksburg, ordering me to come with two of my divisions to Perkins' plantation about forty miles down the river. I sent down orders for Tuttle's and Steele's divisions to march at once and yesterday afternoon we renewed the cannonade and kept it up till night when he ran down to our camp and moved up to Milliken's Bend. Steele's and Tuttle's divisions have gone out and I start to-morrow to overtake and pass them. I have nothing positive from below. Blair's division remains here. . . ."

Writing from "Camp opposite Grand Gulf, Mississippi," May 6, 1863, Sherman spoke of the wanton destruction wrought on a fine plantation in the path of the army,<sup>1</sup> and added: "It is done of course by the

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, I, 348-9.

✓ cursed stragglers who won't fight, but hang behind and disgrace our cause and country. Dr. Bowie had fled, leaving everything on the approach of our troops. Of course devastation marked the whole path of the army, and I know all the principal officers detest the infamous practice as much as I do. Of course I expect and do take corn, bacon, ham, mules and everything to support an army, and don't object much to the using of fences for firewood. But this universal burning and wanton destruction of private property is not justified in war."

"15TH ARMY CORPS, HANKINSON'S FERRY,

"18 MILES FROM GRAND GULF, May 9,

"1863.

"One week after hammering away at Haines' Bluff I got here and overtook Grant's army, having marched eighty-three miles and crossed the Mississippi. We are short of wagons and provisions, but in this starving country we find an abundance of corn, hogs, cattle, sheep, and poultry. Men who came in advance have drawn but two days' rations in ten and are fat. Tomorrow I march to Big Sandy, nine miles. Next day to Auburn fifteen miles, and we will then be within striking distance of the railroad running east from Vicksburg. The enemy must come out to fight us soon or we will be in their rear. The army is in good condition and if they fight us we will have a desperate one. Grant was delighted to see me, and everything works well. . . ."

“ON WALNUT HILLS, ABOVE VICKSBURG,

“*May* 19, 1863.

“We made a full circuit, entered Jackson first, destroyed an immense quantity of railroad and Confederate property, and then pushed for this point which secures the Yazoo and leaves [us] to take Vicksburg. We assaulted yesterday, but it is very strong. We estimate its present garrison at 15,000 or more, and Johnston is hovering about with reinforcements. We had a heavy fight yesterday. Regulars suffered much—Capt. Washington killed, five officers wounded—Charley in the hand. He saved the colors. He is now in the midst of shells and shot. Hugh is also under fire, and had a hard time yesterday. We reached the very parapet, but did not enter the works. We are now encircling the town. I am on the right, McPherson centre, and McClernand left. We are all in good health and spirits at this moment, and, having reached and secured the Yazoo, will soon have plenty to eat. I must again go to the front amid the shot and shells, which follow me but somehow thus far have spared me. Charley’s wound is in the hand, slight, and he now commands the battalion. Keep easy and trust to luck. This is a death struggle and will be terrible. Thus far success has crowned our efforts and we are on high ground, on a level with the enemy, but they are fortified and we must attack, quicker the better. Grant is off to the left with McClernand who did *not* push his attack as he should. Bang, pop, go the guns and muskets, and I must to the front. I have slept on the ground the last two nights to Hill’s <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sherman’s body-servant.

disgust, and he hangs around me like a shadow with a canteen. He is very faithful, but came up to me yesterday under fire with great reluctance!"

"HEADQUARTERS 15TH ARMY CORPS,  
"WALNUT HILLS, *May 25, 1863.*

"Whilst the men are making roads and ditches to enable me to get close up to the enemy's parapet without crossing within full view and fatal effect [from] their well prepared forts and trenches, I have availed myself of the favorable opportunity to pitch a tent and get out writing materials to write up. . . . Devastation and ruin lay behind us, and a garrison of some fifteen or twenty thousand men are before us, cooped up in Vicksburg with about five or six thousand people, women and children. The forts are well built and command the roads, and the hills and valleys are so abrupt and covered with fallen trees, standing trunks and canebrake that we are in a measure confined to the roads. We have made two distinct assaults all along the line, but the heads of columns are swept away as chaff thrown from the hand in a windy day. We are now hard at work with roads and trenches, taking all possible advantage of the shape of the ground. We must work smart, as Joe Johnston is collecting the shattered forces, those we beat at Jackson and Champion Hill, and may get reinforcements from Bragg and Charleston and come pouncing down on our rear. The enemy in Vicksburg must expect aid from that quarter, else they would not fight with such desperation. Vicksburg is not only of importance to them, but now is a subject of pride and



its loss will be fatal to their power out west. Grant's move was the most hazardous, but thus far the most successful of the war. He is entitled to all the credit, for I would not have advised it. We have now perfect communication with our supplies, plenty of provisions, tools and ammunition, and if vast reinforcements do not come from the outside Vicksburg is ours as sure as fate.

"I suppose you have all been in intense anxiety. Charley was very conspicuous in the first assault and brought off the colors of the battalion which are now in front of my tent, the staff  $\frac{1}{4}$  cut away by a ball that took with it a part of his finger. . . . We brought off nearly all our dead and all the wounded, and the enemy called from their pits warning the burial parties not to come down as they could take care of those left. Our pickets are up so close that they can hardly show their heads without drawing hundreds of shots. In like manner we can hardly show a hand without the whirl of a minnie ball. Our artillery is all well placed and must do havoc in the town. We have over a hundred cannon which pour a constant fire over the parapets, the balls going right towards their Court House and depot.

"In about three days our approach will be so close that another assault will be made, but the enemy like beavers are digging as hard as we. . . ."

"WALNUT HILLS [above Vicksburg], *June 2, 1863.*

"Since our arrival here I have written you several short letters and one telegraph despatch, simply telling you of our safety. I suppose by this time you have heard enough of our march and safe arrival on the

Yazoo whereby we re-established our communications, supplying the great danger of this roundabout movement. We were compelled to feel and assault Vicksburg, as it was the only way to measure the amount of opposition to be apprehended. We now know that it is strongly fortified on all sides and that the garrison is determined to defend it to the last. We could simply invest the place and allow famine and artillery to finish the work, but we know that desperate efforts will be made to relieve the place. Joe Johnston, one of the most enterprising of all their generals, is assembling from every quarter an army at Jackson and Canton, and he will soon be coming down between the Yazoo and Black. Of course Grant is doing all he can to provide against every contingency. He sent to Banks, but Banks is investing Port Hudson and asks for reinforcements from us. All the men that can be spared from West Tennessee will be called here, and I trust Rosecrans will not allow any of Bragg's army to be detached against us, but we hear he is planting gardens and it may be he will wait to gather a crop. The weather is now very hot and we are digging roads and approaches so that it tells on our men, but they work cheerfully and I have approaches and parallels within eighty yards of the enemy's line. Daily we open a cannonade and make the dirt fly, but the Rebels lay close in their pits and holes and we cannot tell what execution is done. I pity the poor families in Vicksburg. Women and children are living in caves and holes underground whilst our shot and shells tear through their houses overhead. Daily and nightly conflagrations occur, but still we cannot see

the mischief done. We can see the Court House and steeples of churches, also houses on the hills back of town, but the city lies on the face of the hill towards the river, and that is hidden from view by the shape of ground. The hills are covered with trees and are very precipitous, affording us good camps. I have mine close up on a spur where we live very comfortably. I go out every morning and supervise the progress of work, and direct the fire of the guns. The enemy's sharpshooters have come very near hitting me several times, but thus far I have escaped unhurt. Pitzman, my engineer, was shot in the hip and is gone North. . . .

"The Northern papers bring accounts of our late movements very much exaggerated, but still approximating the truth. I did not go to Haines' Bluff at all, because the moment I reached the ground in its rear I was master of it; pushed on to the very gates of Vicksburg and sent cavalry back to Haines to pick up the points of the strategic movement. Grant is now deservedly the hero. He is entitled to all the credit of the movement which was risky and hazardous in the extreme and succeeded because of its hazard. He is now belabored with praise by those who a month ago accused him of all the sins in the calendar, and who next week will turn against him if so blows the popular breeze.

"Vox populi, vox humbug. We are in good fighting trim, and I expect still more hard knocks. The South will not give up Vicksburg without the most desperate struggle. In about three days we ought to be able to make another assault, carrying our men well up to the enemy's ditch under cover. . . ."

“WALNUT HILLS, *June 11, 1863.*

“. . . I don't believe I can give you an idea of matters here. You will read so much about Vicksburg and the people now gathered about it that you will get bewildered, and I will wait till maps become more abundant. I miss Pitzman very much. I feel his loss just as I did that of Morgan L. Smith at Chickasaw, both wounded in the hip, reconnoitering. So far as Vicksburg is concerned the same great features exist. The deep washes and ravines with trees felled makes a network of entangled abattis all round the city, and if we had a million of men we would be compelled to approach it by the narrow heads of columns which approach the concealed trenches and casemates of a concealed and brave and desperate enemy. We cannot carry our men across this continuous parapet without incurring fearful loss. We have been working making roads and paths around spurs, up hollows, until I now have on my front of over two miles three distinct ways by which I can get close up to the ditch, but still each has a narrow front and any man who puts his head above ground has his head shot off. All day and night continues the sharp crack of the rifle and deep sound of mortars and cannon hurling shot and shell at the doomed city. I think we have shot twenty thousand cannon balls and many millions of musket balls into Vicksburg, but of course the great mass of these bury into the earth and do little harm. We fire one hundred shot to their one, but they being scarce of ammunition take better care not to waste it. I rode away round to McClelland's lines the day before yesterday, and found that he was digging his ditches and parallels further

back from the enemy than where I began the first day. My works are further advanced than any other, but still it will take some time to dig them out. The truth is we trust to the starvation. Accounts vary widely. Some deserters say they have plenty to eat, and others say they are down to pea bread and poor beef. I can see horses and mules gently grazing within the lines and therefore do not count on starvation yet. All their soldiers are in the trenches and none know anything but what occurs close to them. Food is cooked by negroes back in the hollows in rooms cut out of the hills and carried to them by night. The people, women and children, have also cut houses underground out of the peculiar earth, where they live in comparative safety from our shells and shot. Still I know great execution must have been done, and Vicksburg at this moment must be a horrid place. Yet the people have been wrought up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that I have not yet met one but would prefer all to perish rather than give up. They feel doomed, but rely on Joe Johnston. Of him we know but little save we hear of a force at Yazoo City, at Canton, Jackson and Clinton. . . ."

"CAMP ON BEAR CREEK, 20 MILES N. W.

"OF VICKSBURG, *June 27, 1863.*

"I am out here studying a most complicated geography and preparing for Joe Johnston if he comes to the relief of Vicksburg. As usual I have to leave my old companions and troops in the trenches of Vicksburg, and deal with strange men, but I find all willing and enthusiastic. Although the weather is intensely hot I



have ridden a great deal, and think I know pretty well the weak and strong points of this extended line of circumvallation, and if Johnston comes I think he will have a pretty hard time to reach Vicksburg, although from the broken nature of the country he may feign at many points and attack but at one. Black River, the real line, is now so low it can be forded at almost any point and I prefer to fight him at the ridge along which all the roads lead. Of these there are several some of which I have blocked with fallen trees and others left open for our own purposes, and which will be open to him if he crosses over. . . .

"My military family numbers by the tens of thousands and all must know that they enjoy a part of my thoughts and attention. With officers and soldiers I know how to deal, but am willing to admit ignorance as to the people who make opinions according to their contracted knowledge and biassed prejudices, but I know the time is coming when the opinion of men 'not in arms at the country's crisis, when her calamities call for every man capable of bearing arms' will be light as [compared] to those of men who first, last and all the time were in the van. . . .

"I doubt if history affords a parallel to the deep and bitter enmity of the women of the South. No one who sees them and hears them but must feel the intensity of their hate. Not a man is seen; nothing but women with houses plundered, fields open to the cattle and horses, pickets lounging on every porch, and desolation sown broadcast, servants all gone and women and children bred in luxury, beautiful and accomplished, beg-



ging with one breath for the soldiers' rations and in another praying that the Almighty or Joe Johnston will come and kill us, the despoilers of their homes and all that is sacred. Why cannot they look back to the day and the hour when I, a stranger in Louisiana, begged and implored them to pause in their career, that secession was death, was everything fatal, and that their seizure of the public arsenals was an insult that the most abject nation must resent or pass down to future ages an object of pity and scorn? Vicksburg contains many of my old pupils and friends; should it fall into our hands I will treat them with kindness, but they have sowed the wind and must reap the whirlwind. Until they lay down their arms and submit to the rightful authority of the government they must not appeal to me for mercy or favors. . . ."

"CAMP NEAR BLACK RIVER,

"20 miles east of Vicksburg, *July 5, 1863.*

"You will have heard all about the capitulation of Vicksburg on the 4th of July, and I suppose duly appreciate it. It is the event of the war thus far. Davis placed it in the scale of Richmond, and pledged his honor that it should be held even if he had to abandon Tennessee. But it was of no use. and we are now in full possession. I am out and have not gone in to see, as even before its surrender Grant was disposing to send me forth to meet Johnston who is and has been since June 15th collecting a force about Jackson, to raise the siege. I will have Ord's corps, the 13th (McClernand's), Sherman's 15th and Parkes' 9th. All

were to have been out last night, but Vicksburg and the 4th of July were too much for one day and they are not yet come. I expect them hourly. I am busy making three bridges to cross Black River, and shall converge on Bolton and Clinton, and if not held back by Johnston shall enter Jackson and there finish what was so well begun last month and break up all the railroads and bridges in the interior so that it will be impossible for armies to assemble again to threaten the river.

"The capture of Vicksburg is to me the first gleam of daylight in this war. It was strong by nature, and had been strengthened by immense labor and stores. Grant telegraphs me 27,000 prisoners, 128 field guns and 100 siege pieces. Add to these 13 guns and 5,000 prisoners at Arkansas Post, 18 guns and 250 prisoners at Jackson, 5 guns and 2,000 prisoners at Port Gibson, 10 heavy guns at Grand Gulf, 60 field guns and 3,500 prisoners at Champion Hill and 14 heavy guns at Haines' Bluff, beside the immense amounts of ammunition, shot, shells, horses, wagons, etc., make the most extraordinary fruits of our six months' campaign. Here is glory enough for all the heroes of the West, but I content myself with knowing and feeling that our enemy is weakened by so much, and more yet by failing to hold a point deemed by them as essential to their empire in the Southwest. We have ravaged the land, and have sent away half a million of negroes, so that this country is paralyzed and cannot recover its lost strength in twenty years.

"Had the eastern armies done half as much war would be substantially entered upon. But I read of

Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia being threatened and Rosecrans sitting idly by, writing for personal fame in the newspapers, and our government at Washington chiefly engaged in pulling down its leaders,—Hooker now consigned to retirement. Well, I thank God we are free from Washington and that we have in Grant not a ‘great man’ or a ‘hero,’ but a good, plain, sensible, kind-hearted fellow. Here are Grant and Sherman, and McPherson, three sons of Ohio, [who] have achieved more actual success than all else combined, and I have yet to see the first kindly notice of us in the state, but on the contrary a system of abuse designed and calculated to destroy us with the people and the army; but the Army of the Tennessee, those who follow their colors and do not skulk behind in the North, at the hospitals and depots far to the rear, know who think and act, and if life is spared us our countrymen will realize the truth. I shall go on through heat and dust till the Mississippi is clear, till the large armies of the enemy in this quarter seek a more secure base, and then I will renew my hopes of getting a quiet home, where we can grow up among our children and prepare them for the dangers which may environ their later life. I did hope Grant would have given me Vicksburg and let some one else follow up the enemy inland, but I never suggest anything to myself personal, and only what I deem necessary to fulfil the purposes of war. I know that the capture of Vicksburg will make an impression the world over, and expect loud acclamations in the Northwest, but I heed more its effect on Louisiana and Arkansas. If Banks succeed, as he now must, at Port

Hudson, and the army in Missouri push to Little Rock, the region west of the Mississippi will cease to be the theatre of war save to the bands of robbers created by war who now prefer to live by pillage than honest labor. Rosecrans' army and this could also, acting in concert, drive all opposing masses into the recesses of Georgia and Alabama, leaving the Atlantic slopes the great theatre of war.

"I wish Halleck would put a guard over the White House to keep out the committees of preachers, grannies and Dutchmen that absorb Lincoln's time and thoughts, fill up our thinned ranks with conscripts, and then handle these vast armies with the single thought of success regardless of who shall get the personal credit and glory.

"I am pleased to hear from you that occasionally you receive kindness from men out of regard to me. I know full well there must be a large class of honest people North who are sick of the wrangling of officers for power and notoriety, and are sick of the silly flattery piled by interested parties on their favorites. McClelland, the only sample of that sort with us, played himself out, and there is not an officer or soldier here but rejoices he is gone away. With an intense selfishness and lust of notoriety he could not let his mind get beyond the limits of his vision, and therefore all was brilliant about him and dark and suspicious beyond. My style is the reverse. I am somewhat blind to what occurs near me, but have a clear perception of things and events remote. Grant possesses the happy medium and it is for this reason I admire him. I have a much quicker perception of things than he; but he balances

the present and remote so evenly that results follow in natural course.

"I would not have risked the passing the batteries at Vicksburg and trusting to the long route by Grand Gulf and Jackson to reach what we both knew were the key points to Vicksburg. But I would have aimed to reach the same points by Grenada.<sup>1</sup>

"But both aimed at the same points, and though both of us knew little of the actual ground, it is wonderful how well they have realized our military calculations.

"As we sat in Oxford last November we saw in the future what we now realize, and like the architect who sees developed the beautiful vision of his brain, we feel an intense satisfaction at the realization of our military plans. Thank God, no President was near to thwart our plans, and that the short-sighted public could not drive us from our object till the plan was fully realized.

"Well, the campaign of Vicksburg is ended, and I am either to begin anew or simply make complete the natural sequences of a finished job. I regard my movement as the latter, though you and others may be distressed at the guesses of our newspaper correspondents on the spot (Cairo) and made to believe I am marching on Mobile, on Chattanooga, or Atlanta. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of August 20, 1863, Sherman wrote: "I confess to feel some pride that I have linked my name with Grant's in achieving one of the stupendous works of this war." In his *Personal Memoirs* (I, 543 n.) Grant wrote: "Sherman gave the same energy to make the campaign a success that he would or could have done if it had been ordered by himself."

## IX

### MISSISSIPPI AND GEORGIA CAMPAIGNS

1863-1864

SHERMAN, in his *Memoirs*, tells of the summer of comparative rest which, for him, followed the taking of Vicksburg. We find him established on the bank of the Big Black River, about twenty miles from the captured city, and sending for his wife and four children to spend the summer in his camp. The oldest son, a boy of nine, bore his father's name, and was the object of a peculiar devotion and pride. The pathos of his brief illness and death from typhoid fever at this time, a pathos the more poignant for Sherman's self-reproach at having subjected his boy to the very risk which was his doom, shows itself clearly in the pages of the *Memoirs*. It was at Memphis on October 3, 1863, that the boy died. Sherman was hurrying his troops to the support of Rosecrans after his defeat by Bragg at Chickamauga, and at the same time was starting his family on its journey back to Lancaster, Ohio. A letter preserved in the *Memoirs*, expressing Sherman's gratitude for the sympathy of the officers and men immediately near him, may well be supplemented by passages from three letters which followed Mrs. Sherman on her northward way. They illustrate memorably the essential tenderness of Sherman's nature.



On October 6th he wrote at 7 A. M. from the Gayoso Hotel in Memphis where his son died: "I have got up early this morning to steal a short period in which to write to you, but I can hardly trust myself. Sleeping, waking, everywhere I see poor little Willy. His face and form are as deeply imprinted on my memory as were deep-seated the hopes I had in his future. Why, oh why, should that child be taken from us, leaving us full of trembling and reproaches? Though I know we did all human beings could do to arrest the ebbing tide of life, still I will always deplore my want of judgment in taking my family to so fatal a climate at so critical a period of the year. . . . To it must be traced the loss of that child on whose future I had based all the ambition I ever had. . . . I follow you in my mind and almost estimated the hour when all Lancaster would be shrouded in gloom to think that Willy Sherman was coming back a corpse. Dear as may be to you the Valley of Hocking,<sup>1</sup> no purer, nobler boy ever will again gladden it. . . . My command will be much smaller than the world thinks, but I do not even name the fact to those about me. Our country should blush to allow our thinned regiments to go on till nothing is left. But I will go on to the end, but feel the chief stay to my faltering heart is now gone.

"But I must not dwell so much on it. I will try and make poor Willy's memory the cure for the defects which have sullied my character."

At the end of a letter written two days later (October 8) Sherman exclaimed: "Oh! that poor Willy could have

<sup>1</sup> Lancaster, Ohio, is on the Hocking, a tributary of the Ohio.

lived to take all that was good of me in name, character and standing, and learn to avoid all that is captious, eccentric or wrong. But I do not forget that we have other children worthy of my deepest love. I would not have one different from what they are."

Again on October 10: "I still feel out of heart to write. The moment I begin to think of you and the children, poor Willy appears before me as plain as life. I can see him now stumbling over the sand hills on Harrison Street, San Francisco, at the table in Leavenworth, running to meet me with open arms at Black River, and last, moaning in death at this hotel. . . . I see ladies and children playing in the room where Willy died, and it seems sacrilege. I know you are now at home, and I pray that Minnie<sup>1</sup> has gradually recovered her health and strength, and I hope all our children will regain their full health. Why should I ever have taken them to that dread climate! It nearly kills me when I think of it. Why was I not killed at Vicksburg, and left Willy to grow up to care for you? God knows I exhausted human foresight and human love for that boy, and will pardon any error of judgment that carried him to death."

Less than two years before the death of Sherman's boy Lincoln had lost his eleven-year-old son Willie, also through typhoid fever, and had put aside the private grief to bear with all his strength the burdens of his country. To Sherman's lot fell the same hard necessity. The battle of Chattanooga (November 23-25) was to be fought and won that the North might receive a Thanks-

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's oldest daughter.

giving day message of rejoicing such as had come from Vicksburg on the previous Fourth of July; and Sherman, leaving Memphis on October 11, had to march his command over three hundred and fifty miles of hostile country in order to contribute, in the very nick of time, to the Union victory. Letters from Chattanooga itself are lacking, but passages from two letters written on the way thither illustrate yet again the depth of Sherman's bereavement and that loyalty to Grant which has already been shown:

“CORINTH, MISS., *October 14, 1863.*

“I was much relieved at the receipt of your two letters from Cairo and Cincinnati, both of which came out last night. I shew your message to Dr. Roler, who was affected to tears. Poor Doctor, although I have poured out my feelings of gratitude to him, he seems to fear we may have a lingering thought that he failed somehow in saving poor Willy. Your loving message may have dispelled the thought, and I shall never fail to manifest to him my heartfelt thanks for the unsleeping care he took of the boy. I believe hundreds would have freely died could they have saved his life. I know I would, and occasionally indulged the wish that some of those bullets that searched for my life at Vicksburg had been successful, that it might have removed the necessity for that fatal visit. . . .

“Everybody in Memphis manifested for me a respect and affection that I never experienced North. I am told that when the report went into Memphis that my train was surely captured at Collierville, the utmost

excitement prevailed at Memphis, and a manifest joy displayed when they heard the truth, that we were not only safe, but that we had saved Collierville and the railroad. At Lagrange, east of Collierville, Gen. Sweeny, the one-armed officer you may remember at St. Louis Arsenal, hearing that I was captured started south with his whole force, determined to rescue Gen. Sherman. As soon as I learned the fact I sent a courier to overtake him, advising him of my safety, but advising him to push on and drive Chalmers far to the south. He is still out. I have this moment received a despatch from Gen. Grant at Memphis. He is *en route* to Cairo to communicate by telegraph with Washington. I know there is a project to give him command of the Great Centre, the same idea I foreshadowed in my days of depression and insult. I advise him by all means to assent, to go to Nashville and command Burnside on the Right, Rosecrans Centre, and Sherman Left. That will be an Army, and if our ranks were full I would have hopes of great and decisive results. I have stood by Grant in his days of sorrow. Not six miles from here <sup>1</sup> he sat in his tent almost weeping at the accumulated charges against him by such villains as Stanton of Ohio, Wade and others. He had made up his mind to leave for good. I begged him, and he yielded. I could see his good points and his weak points better than I could my own, and he now feels that I stood by him in his days of dejection and he is my sworn friend. Corinth brings back to me the memory of those events and bids me heed my own counsels to others. Oh! that poor Willy could live

<sup>1</sup> See p. 228.

to reap the fruits of whatever is good in me, and avoid the evil. If it so be that he can see our hearts from above he will read in mine a love for him such as would not taint the purest heaven that you ever dreamed of. God spare us the children that are left, and if I am pardoned for exposing them wrongfully I will never again. . . .”

“IUKA, MISS., *October 24, 1863.*

“. . . I have had a pretty bad cold for the past two days and am delayed here by bad breaks on the Railroad ahead. The Tennessee is also swollen, and I expect all sorts of trouble in getting over, unless boats are sent up the Tennessee. We have had some fighting ahead with the enemy's cavalry, a pretty formidable body sent ahead from Mississippi, the same division that was in my front at Big Black and all of Wheeler's cavalry that escaped from Tennessee; but I can engage their attention and then divert their minds from the road which supplies Rosecrans' army. Grant I suppose now is at Nashville, and will by his presence unite the army more in feeling than it seems hitherto to have been. He is so unpretending and honest that a man must be base who will not yield to him. The only possible danger is that some may claim his successes hitherto have been the result of accident, but there too I hope they will find themselves mistaken. I have telegraphic notice from Memphis that he has assumed command of the Armies of the Cumberland, Ohio and Tennessee, and that I am to command the latter. My desire has always been to have a distinct compact command, as a Corps, but spite of my efforts I am pushed into complicated places that

others aspire to and which I wish they had. But with Grant I will undertake anything in reason. . . .

"I see your thoughts as mine dwell with poor Willy in his grave. I do not, and you should not, reproach yourself a moment for any neglect of him. He knew and felt every moment of his life our deep, earnest love for him. The day he came on board the *Atlantic*<sup>1</sup> I think I observed that usual suppressed feeling of pride at having secured that gun. I know I joked him about it and think he received it in his usual manner, and yet at that moment he must have felt the seed of that disorder which proved so fatal. He did not know it then, and we could not so quickly detect the symptoms. . . . God knows and he knows that either of us, and hundreds of others, would have died to save him. . . ."

In the winter months following the victory at Chattanooga, operations on a large scale were impracticable. For himself, Sherman planned an expedition, his "Meridian Campaign," east from Vicksburg to impair the strength of the Confederacy in the interior of Mississippi. One letter written on the eve of this expedition, and two on its completion, illuminate his part in it:

"ON BOARD GUN-BOAT *Juliet*,  
"MOUTH OF WHITE RIVER, *January 28, 1864.*

". . . I sent you a paper about the banquet<sup>2</sup> which was really a fine affair. The hall of the Gayoso was

<sup>1</sup> The boat from Vicksburg to Memphis. See *Memoirs*, I, 376.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter written on the same day to his brother John, Sherman said: "I could not well decline an offer of a public dinner in Memphis, but I dreaded it more than I did the assault on Vicksburg." See *Sherman Letters*, p. 221.



crammed and the utmost harmony prevailed. Everything passed off well. My remarks as reported by the *Argus* were about right. The *Bulletin* got mere incoherent points. I cannot speak consecutively, but it seems that what I do say is vehemently applauded. The point which may be wrongly conceived was this. As the South resorted to war, we accepted it, and as they fought for Slaves and States' Rights they could not blame us if they lost both as the result of the war; and again, that they, the South, prided themselves on high grounds of honor. I am willing to take issue then adopting their own rules, as those of the most fashionable clubs of London, New Orleans, and Paris. If a member goes into an election he must abide the result or be blackballed or put in Coventry. Now as the Southern people went into the presidential election they, as honorable men, were bound to abide the result. I also described the mode and manner of seizure of the garrison and arsenal at Baton Rouge and pronounced that a breach of soldierly honor, and the firing on boats from behind a cottonwood tree. People at the North may not feel the weight of these points, but I know the South so well that I know what I said will be gall and wormwood to some, but it will make others think. I was at Memphis Tuesday and part of Wednesday. The festival was on Monday and several real old Southerners met me and confessed their cause would be recorded in history as I put it. I was not aware of the hold I had on the people till I was there this time. Hurlbut did not mingle with them and was difficult of access, and every time I went into a theatre or public assemblage there was a storm of applause.

I endeavored to avoid it as much as possible, but it was always so good-natured that I could not repel it. If I succeed in my present blow I would not be surprised if Mississippi would be as Tennessee, but I do not allow myself to be deceived. The Old Régime is not yet dead, and they will fight for their old privileges; yet so many of our old regiments are going on furlough that we will be short-handed. If we had our ranks full I know we could take Mobile and the Alabama River in thirty days and before summer could secure all of Red River also, leaving the Grand Battle to come off in East Tennessee or Georgia in June. We could hold fast all we have and let the South wriggle, but our best plan is activity. . . .

"I am about to march two hundred miles straight into danger with a comparatively small force and that composed of troops in a manner strange to me; but my calculations are all right, and now for the execution. I expect to leave Vicksburg in a very few days, and will cut loose all communications, so you will not hear from me save through the Southern papers till I am back to the Mississippi. You, of course, will be patient and will appreciate my motives in case of accident, for surely I could ask rest and an opportunity for some one else, say McPherson, but there are double reasons: I will never order my command where I am not willing to go, and besides it was politic to break up the force at Memphis which was too large to lie idle, and Hurlbut would not reduce it. I had to bring him away and make a radical change. He ranks McPherson, and we have not confidence enough in his steadiness to put him on

this expedition. He is too easily stampeded by rumors. I have a better sense of chances. I run two chances, first, in case the enemy has learned my plans or has guessed them, he may send to Meridian a superior force. A bad road may prevent my moving with the celerity which will command success. Would that I had the Fifteenth corps that would march in sunshine or storm to fulfil my plans without asking what they were. I almost wish I had been left with that specific command, but confess I prefer service near the old Mississippi which enables us to supply ourselves so bountifully. I hear but little from Huntsville, but suppose all our folks are comfortable there. I sent Maj. Taylor, Fitch and McFeely back to Huntsville from Memphis, and have with me only my aids and quarter-master. I don't want any non-combatant mouths along to feed, and am determined this time not to have a tribe of leeches along to consume our food. Not a tent shall be carried or any baggage save on our horses. The wagons and packs shall carry ammunition and food alone. I will set the example myself. Experience has taught me if one tent is carried any quantity of trash will load down the wagons. If I had ten more regiments I would be tempted to try Mobile, but as it is if I break at Meridian and Memphis, I will cut off one of the most fruitful corn supplies of the enemy, and will give Mississippi a chance to rest. The State is now full of conscript gangs carrying to their armies the unwilling, the old and young. We will take all provisions, and God help the starving families! I warned them last year against this last visitation, and now it is at hand. . .

"I feel the full load of care and anxiety you bear, mourning for Willy, fearing for the future, and oppressed with intense anxiety for parents. I believe you can bear all, and that you will for our sakes. Just think of me with fifty thousand lives in my hand, with all the anxiety of their families. This load is heavier than even you imagine. . . ."

"STEAMBOAT *Westmoreland*,

"APPROACHING MEMPHIS, *March 10, 1864.*

"Again I am approaching you. I have done all I undertook, and am now *en route* for Huntsville, but must stop it may be a week at Memphis to complete certain matters made necessary by General Grant's orders received yesterday, when I expect to come to Cairo and Louisville and Huntsville. I do not think I can come to Cincinnati, for too much rests with me now, and however disposed, I must go on for the spring campaign which I judge will be the most sanguinary of all. . . .

"I have just received from General Grant a letter in which he gives me and McPherson credit for having won for him his present high position. . . .

"I have no doubt you were amused at the thousand and one stories about my Meridian trip. It certainly baffled the sharp ones of the press and stampeded all Alabama, but in fact was a pleasant excursion. Weather was beautiful, roads good and plenty to eat, what fighting we had was all on one side. Our aggregate loss is 21 killed, 68 wounded, and 81 missing, 170 all told. But in a day or two I will send you my report which will be clear and explicit. I have sent 10,000 men up

Red River under General A. J. Smith with Admiral Porter to co-operate with General Banks. They are to be gone only thirty days when they come around to me at Huntsville. I want to make up my army there to 40,000 men. So when we cross the Tennessee look out. Grant in command, Thomas the Centre, Schofield the Left and Sherman Right—if we can't whip Joe Johnston, we will know the reason why; Banks in the meantime to come out of Red River and swing against Mobile. If he had been smart he could have walked into Mobile when I was in Meridian. I am down on Wm. Sooy Smith. He could have come to me, I know it, and had he, I would have captured Polk's army; but the enemy had too much cavalry for me to attempt it with men afoot. As it was I scared the Bishop out of his senses. He made a clean run and I could not get within a day's march of him. He had railroads to help him, but these are now gone. Had I tolerated a corps of newspaper men how could I have made that march a success? Am I not right? And does not the world now see it? . . .

"On my way down I picked up at Natchez a prisoner of war, Professor Boyd, my favorite among the officers of the academy at Alexandria. I never saw a man evince more gratitude. He clung to me till I came away. Stone promised to be kind to him and to exchange him the first opportunity. He told me all about the people up river and said they talked about me a great deal, some with marked respect and others with bitter hatred. . . .

"Many of the negroes are gone and the present trip up Red River will clean out the balance. Boyd tells me

the motto over the door of the Seminary is chiselled out. You remember it in my letter of resignation: 'By the liberality of the General Government of the United States. The Union, Esto perpetua.' The fools! Though obliterated it lives in the memory of thousands and it may be restored in a few days. I wanted to go up Red River, but as Banks was to command in person I thought best not to go. Grant wanted me to command, but I reported my reason as before stated. Banks ranks Grant and myself. But now Grant will be Lieutenant-General and will command all he pleases. Of course I can get anything I want, but as soon as the spring campaign is over I want to come here and look after the Mississippi. Like the story of Gil Blas, 'Here lies my soul.' Though Willy died here his pure and holy spirit will hover over this the grand artery of America. I want to live out here and die here also, and don't care if my grave be like De Soto's in its muddy waters.<sup>1</sup> . . ."

"MEMPHIS, *March* 12, 1864.

". . . Of all the expeditions sent out this spring mine has been best conducted and most successful simply because of the secrecy and expedition with which it was planned and executed. Had the enemy been informed of these in advance by our prying correspondents I might have shared the fate of Seymour.<sup>2</sup> He did not go forty miles from his base, whereas I went one hundred and

<sup>1</sup> It was at General Sherman's own request that he was buried, in 1891, at St. Louis by the side of his son.

<sup>2</sup> In the previous month General Truman Seymour had met defeat in Florida.



eighty-two miles. I have written Grant a long letter and begged him to adhere to his resolution not to stay at Washington. He would not stand the intrigues of politicians a week. He now occupies a dazzling height and it will require more courage to withstand the pressure than a dozen battles. I wonder if you kept a certain despatch Halleck made me from Corinth in June 1862 and my answer from Moscow. I foretold to Halleck his loss, and the fact that the man who won the Mississippi would be *the* man. I wish you would hunt it up—I know I saw it among your papers—and show it to Phil to satisfy him, however extravagant my early assertions may have seemed, how they are verified by time. I feel that whilst my mind naturally slights the events actually transpiring in my presence it sees as clear as any one's the results to be evolved by time. Now Halleck has more reserve book-learning and knowledge of men than Grant, and is therefore better qualified for his present post; whereas the latter by his honesty, simplicity, candor and reliance on friends, is better suited to act with soldiers. I would rather occupy my present relation to the military world than any other command and therefore must serve out this campaign which is to be the test. All that has gone before is mere skirmishing. The war now begins, and with heavy well-disciplined masses the issue must be settled in hard fought battles. I think we can whip them in Alabama and it may be Georgia. . . . No amount of poverty or adversity seems to shake their faith: niggers gone, wealth and luxury gone, money worthless, starvation in view within a period of two or three years, and causes

enough to make the bravest tremble. Yet I see no signs of let up—some few deserters, plenty tired of war, but the masses determined to fight it out. . . .”

The “Meridian Campaign” was followed by minor activities on Sherman’s part, but a greater enterprise than any he had undertaken was near at hand. On Grant’s removal to the East in March of 1864, to take command of all the armies of the United States, the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi fell to Sherman. The prominence and responsibility he had long shunned were no longer avoidable. His immediate duty was to plan and direct the “Atlanta Campaign,” which was to last from May to September. Not only was Sherman’s chief antagonist, General Joseph E. Johnston, one of the most elusive and skilful of soldiers; but advancing into a hostile country, fed from without by a single artery of supply, “it was manifest,” as Sherman wrote in his *Memoirs*, “that we should have to repair the railroad, use it, and guard it likewise.” The difficulties of the problem were innumerable. Through April Sherman employed all his foresight to meet those which could be met in advance. The following letters, all but two written after his own start from Chattanooga was made on May 5, deal with events of the highest moment in the progress of the Union cause.

“NASHVILLE, *April 27, 1864.*

“. . . To-morrow I start for Chattanooga and at once prepare for the coming campaign. I will have 20,000

less men than I calculated, from the Red River disaster<sup>1</sup> and two divisions of McPherson, whose furlough won't expire. These furloughs have, as I feared, impaired if not lost us this campaign. When men get home they forget their comrades here, and though Governors are very patriotic in offers of troops their acts fall far short of their promises. Our armies are now weaker than at any former point of the war. My old corps has dwindled away to 10,000 though we had promises that all the regiments would come with two or three hundred recruits each, but the recruits seem to have pocketed the money and like selfish men staid at home.

"I will begin with Schofield, 12,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry; Thomas, 40,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry; and McPherson, 20,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Combined it is a big army and a good one, and it will take a strong opposition to stop us once in motion.

"Dalton will be our first point, Kingston next, then Allatoona and then Atlanta. All the attacks of the enemy on Paducah, Fort Pillow and in North Carolina are to draw us off from our concentration. As soon as we move they will attempt to cut in behind and cut our roads and fight us in front. So we are forced to detach men to guard our railroads all the way from Louisville to Chattanooga. . . ."

"CHATTANOOGA, *May 4, 1864.*

" . . . We are now moving. Thomas's whole army is at Ringgold, Schofield is on his left near Red Clay,

<sup>1</sup> The failure of the Red River expedition under General Banks. See p. 285.

and McPherson is here and moves out to-morrow. I will go to Ringgold to-morrow and will then be within five miles of the enemy. We may have some of the desperate fighting of the war, but it cannot be avoided, deferred or modified. I will as heretofore do my best and trust to the troops. All my dispositions thus far are good. . . .”

“KINGSTON, Geo., *May 20, 1864.*

“I have no doubt you will complain of neglect on my part, but you have sense enough to see that my every minute has been taken. According to appointment with General Grant I got everything as far ready as possible on the 5th and started from Chattanooga on the 6th. Troops had to be marched and collected from all parts of the country without attracting attention, and I got McPherson up to Chattanooga and on Johnston's flank before he suspected anything more than a detachment of Thomas' command.

“Dalton lies in a valley, but the road passes through a gap which was a most formidable place. I drew Johnston's attention to it whilst I moved the army round through a gap thirty miles further south and appeared on his rear and flank. He hastily evacuated Dalton and succeeded in getting into Resaca, eighteen miles, where he had prepared a strong position. This we attacked at all points, getting closer and closer whilst I got a bridge across the Oostenaula, and again threatened his rear. Again he started and we chased him fighting all the way to Cassville, and to-day the army is pushing him across the Etowah. Having a

railroad and familiar with all the byeways he has got off, but at a cost of about 6,000 men. We have a thousand prisoners, have killed and wounded 5,000, and have ourselves lost less than 4,000. We have had no time to count noses. The enemy burned the railroad bridge at Oostenaula, but we have repaired it and now have the telegraph and cars to the very rear of our army. The whole movement has been rapid, skilful and successful, but will be measured by subsequent events. Difficulties increase as we go, for I have to drop men to guard our roads, whereas our enemy gathers up his guards and collects other reinforcements. I will cross the Etowah and Chattahoochee and swing round Atlanta. If I can break up that nest it will be a splendid achievement. Grant's battles in Virginia are fearful but necessary. Immense slaughter is necessary to prove that our Northern armies can and will fight. That once impressed will be an immense moral power. Banks' utter failure is awful, as that force should now be at Mobile. It may be that Canby can straighten out matters. Banks was so intent on civil government that he underrated the military features of his territory. All attempts at civil government in the midst of war are folly. . . ."

"KINGSTON, Geo., *May* 22, 1864.

"To-morrow we start again for Atlanta. I would like to go back and give you a connected narrative of events, but I know that it would take more time than I can devote to it and I suppose you will have curiosity enough to read everything with Sherman at the top of

the page. I believe the world now admits my right to maintain public silence and recognizes it as a military power. The officers and soldiers too have realized that by bringing up McPherson's army with secrecy and despatch and putting it through Snake Creek Gap unobserved [?] that I saved them the terrible door of death that Johnston had prepared for them in the Buzzard Roost. We were forced to attack at Resaca, and there too by catching the strong and weak points I enabled the army to fight at as little disadvantage as possible; and following up quick and strong we gave Johnston no time to fortify, though every pass was barricaded all the way down. I think we inflicted more loss on the enemy than we sustained ourselves, and up to this time we have taken 15 guns, 2,500 prisoners and a large lot of property. Of course, being compelled to guard our communications, our strength is diminished as we advance and that of the enemy increases. I have no doubt we must have a terrific battle at some point near the Chattahoochee. The main roads, however, [?] cross the Etowah thirteen miles from here, and for six miles lay among hills that afford strong positions. These I must avoid, and shall move due south to Dallas and thence to Marietta and the Chattahoochee Bridge. You will no doubt recognize this very country as the one I was in twenty years ago and to which I took such a fancy. Yesterday I rode my lines and passed quite close to Col. Tumlin's place, the same where the big mounds are where I stopped in going from Marietta to Bellefonte and back.<sup>1</sup> I will probably pass by those

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, II, 42.



same big mounds to-morrow. The weather is oppressively hot and roads dusty. I do hope we will have rain as it is choking to soldiers and mules. Our larger trains make a fearful dust.

"I will put up a map to go to you by the mail by which you can trace our progress. Thomas is my centre and has about 45,000 men; McPherson my right, 25,000; and Schofield my left, 15,000; in all 85,000 men, a vast army to feed and to move. I can't move about as I did with 15 or 20,000 men. I think I have the best army in the country, and if I can't take Atlanta and stir up Georgia considerably I am mistaken. Our greatest danger is from cavalry, in which arm of service the enemy is superior to us in quantity and quality, cutting our wagons or railroads. I have on hand, however, enough for twenty days and in that time I ought to determine a good deal. You will no doubt have full accounts of the fighting. At Rocky Face I made our display to attract attention away from McPherson. At Resaca we had some pretty sharp fights; one, Hooker pressing down from the north, another the 15th Corps dashing for position close to the enemy's flank and holding it against repeated night assaults, and Sweeny's division holding the pontoon bridge at Lay's Ferry; all were well and handsomely done. In pursuit I tried hard to strike in behind Johnston with my cavalry, but they did not accomplish it; but we did force the enemy to abandon the line of the Coosa and Etowah which was the first step in the game. Our next is to force him behind the Chattahoochee, and last to take Atlanta and disturb the peace of central Georgia and prevent rein-

forcements going to Lee. If that Banks force could only go to Mobile now, there would not be a shadow of doubt of full success."

"HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE  
"MISSISSIPPI.

"ACWORTH, Geo., *June 9, 1864.*

"I don't know that you can find this place on your map, but it is on the main road from Chattanooga into Georgia, 7 miles in front of Allatoona, 12 from Marietta and 30 from Atlanta. The army lies about the place, extending east, north and south. We are replenishing our wagons with ammunition, forage and provisions. The railroad to our rear is all in good order except the bridge across Etowah burned by the enemy, which will soon be done. I am forced to move with due deliberation to give time for other combinations from Memphis and New Orleans, in Mobile, etc. But we will soon move forward to the Chattahoochee eleven miles beyond Marietta. Johnston may fight us at the ridge of hills just this side of Marietta, but I think I can dislodge him and this will leave the great battle on or near the Chattahoochee, the passage of which he must dispute. He has a strong, well-disciplined army, but I think we can lick him on any thing like fair terms. So I will not run hot-headed against any works prepared for us. He thinks he checked us at Dallas. I went there to avoid the Allatoona pass, and as soon as I had drawn his army there I slipped my cavalry into Allatoona pass and round the main army in its front, a perfect success. I never designed to attack his hastily prepared works at

Dallas and New Hope Church, and as soon as he saw I was making for the railroad around his flank he abandoned his works and we occupied them for a moment and moved by the best road to our present position. We have captured several of their mails and it is wonderful to see how the soldiers talk of driving me back to the Ohio, and then returning to their loving families in Tennessee and Kentucky. I fear they count without their host, as they will have an awful reckoning if they attempt to pass over or around this army.

“The paucity of news from the army at this time in Northern papers is most satisfactory to me. My circular was exactly right. Every officer and soldier should keep his friends and family advised of his own adventures and situation, whilst the busy and mischievous scribblers for newspapers are discountenanced. I know my course is right and meets the unqualified approval of all good soldiers. The press is angry at my term, the ‘cheap’ flattery of the press. We all know that Generals and aspirants bribe these fellows by the loan of government horses and other conveniences not at their individual cost but at the cost of the United States, and in return receive the cheap flattery of the press. The press caused the war, the press gives it point and bitterness, and as long as the press, both North and South, is allowed to fan the flames of discord and hostility, so long must the war last. The Southern press is just the same, and as long as people look to the press for truth and counsel so long will war and anarchy prevail. The liberty of the press, like that of individuals, must be restrained to just limits consistent with

the good of the whole, and every fool must not be allowed to print and publish falsehood and slander as he pleases. . . .”

“IN THE FIELD, BIG SHANTY, Geo.,

“*June 12, 1864.*

“. . . That it should have devolved on me to guide one of the two great armies on which may depend the fate of our people for the next hundred years I somewhat regret. Yet you know I have been drawn into it by a slow and gradual progress which I could not avoid. Grant was forced into his position, and I likewise. I think thus far I have played my game well. Had my plans been executed with the vim I contemplated I should have forced Johnston to fight the decisive battle in the Oostenaula Valley between Dalton and Resaca; but McPherson was a little over-cautious, and we cannot move vast armies of this size with the rapidity of thought or of small bodies.

“For the past ten days, our movements have been vastly retarded by rains. It has rained hard all the time and to-day harder than ever, a steady cold rain. I am in an old house with a fire burning, which is not uncomfortable. Johnston was 60,000 Infantry, 15,000 Cavalry and a good deal of militia. We must have a terrific battle, and he wants to choose and fortify his ground. He also aims to break my road to the rear. I wish we could make an accumulation of stores somewhere near, but the railroad is taxed to its utmost to supply our daily wants.

“The country is stripped of cattle, horses, hogs, and grain, but there are large fine fields of growing oats,

wheat and corn, which our horses and mules devour as we advance. Thus far we have been well supplied, and I hope it will continue, though I expect to hear every day of Forrest breaking into Tennessee from some quarter. Jno. Morgan is in Kentucky, but I attach little importance to him or his raid, as we don't draw anything from Kentucky, and there are plenty of troops there to capture and destroy him. Forrest is a more dangerous man. I am in hopes that an expedition sent out from Memphis on Tupelo about the 1st of June will give him full employment. I have also ordered A. J. Smith with the force he brought out of Red River to move against Mobile by way of diversion. Johnston is now between me and Marietta. As soon as these clouds and storms clear away I will study his position and determine to assault his line or turn it and force him back of the Chattahoochee. As long as I press him close and prevent his sending anything to Lee I fulfill my part of the Grand Plan. In the meantime Grant will give Lee all the fighting he wants until he is sick of the word. Every man in America should now be armed, and all who will not help should be put in petticoats and deprived of the right to vote in the affairs of the after nation. . . ."

"IN THE FIELD, NEAR MARIETTA, Geo., *June 26, 1864.*

". . . I have written but little because my thoughts and mind have been so intent on other matters. Johnston has fallen back several times abandoning long lines of intrenchments, but he still occupies a good position with Kenesaw Mountain as the apex

of his triangle embracing Marietta. His wings fell back four miles one day and I thought he had gone, but not so.

"We have worked our way forward until we are in close contact—constant skirmishing and picket firing. He is afraid to come at us, and we have been cautious about dashing against his breastworks, that are so difficult to undertake in this hilly and wooded country.

"My lines are ten miles long, and every change necessitates a large amount of work. Still we are now all ready and I *must* attack direct or turn the position. Both will be attended with loss and difficulty, but one or the other must be attempted.

"This is Sunday and I will write up all my letters, and to-morrow will pitch in at some one or more points.

"I am now 105 miles from Chattanooga, and all our provisions have come over that single road, which is almost daily broken somewhere, but thus far our supplies have been ample. We have devoured the land and our animals eat up the wheat and corn field close. All the people retire before us and desolation is behind. To realize what war is one should follow our tracks. . . .

"Though not conscious of danger at this moment, I know the country swarms with thousands who would shoot me, and thank their God they had slain a monster; and yet I have been more kindly disposed to the people of the South than any general officer of the whole army."



"IN THE FIELD, NEAR MARIETTA,

"June 30, 1864.

". . . It is enough to make the whole world start at the awful amount of death and destruction that now stalks abroad. Daily for the past two months has the work progressed and I see no signs of a remission till one or both and all the armies are destroyed, when I suppose the balance of the people will tear each other up, as Grant says, re-enacting the story of the Kilkenny cats. I begin to regard the death and mangling of a couple thousand men as a small affair, a kind of morning dash—and it may be well that we become so hardened. Each day is killed or wounded some valuable officers and men, the bullets coming from a concealed foe. I suppose the people are impatient why I don't push on more rapidly to Atlanta, but those who are here are satisfied with the progress. It is as much as our railroad can do to supply us bread, meat and corn, and I cannot leave the railroad to swing on Johnston's flank or rear without giving him the railroad, which I cannot do without having a good supply on hand. I am moving heaven and earth to accomplish this, in which event I shall leave the railroad and move to the Chattahoochee, threatening to cross, which will I think force him to do that very thing, when I will swing round on the road again. In that event he may be all ready and attempt to hold both road and river, but my opinion is he has not force enough to do both. In that event you will be without news of us for ten days. I think we can whip his army in fair battle, but behind the hills and trunks our loss of life and limb on the first assault would re-

duce us too much; in other words, at this distance from home we cannot afford the losses of such terrible assaults as Grant has made. I have only one source of supply. Grant had several in succession. One of my chief objects was to prevent Joe Johnston from detaching against Grant till he got below Richmond, and that I have done. I have no idea of besieging Atlanta, but may cross the Chattahoochee and circle round Atlanta breaking up its roads. . . .

"The worst of the war is not yet begun. The civil strife at the North has to come yet, and the tendency to anarchy to be cured. Look at matters in Kentucky and Missouri and down the Mississippi and Arkansas where shallow people have been taught to believe the war is over, and you will see trouble enough to convince you I was right in my view of the case from the first. . . .

"I hardly think Johnston will give me a chance to fight a decisive battle, unless at such a disadvantage that I ought not to accept, and he is so situated that when threatened or pressed too hard he draws off leaving us a barren victory. He will thus act all summer, unless he gains a great advantage in position or succeeds in breaking our roads. . . ."

"IN THE FIELD NEAR CHATTAHOOCHEE,

*"July 9th, 1864.*

". . . We are now on the Chattahoochee in plain view of the City of Atlanta 9 miles off. The enemy and the Chattahoochee lie between us, and intense heat prevails; but I think I shall succeed. At all events you know I never turn back. I see by the papers

that too much stress was laid on the repulse of June 27th. I was forced to make the effort and it should have succeeded; but the officers and men have been so used to my avoiding excessive danger and forcing back the enemy by strategy that they hate to assault; but to assault is sometimes necessary for its effect on the enemy. Had this assault succeeded I would have then fought Johnston with the advantage on my side instead of his having all the benefit of forts, ground, creeks, etc. As it was I did not give him rest but forced him across the Chattahoochee, which was the first great object. I have already got Schofield and Garrard across the river and therefore can cross the army when I choose. . . . The army is very large and extends from Roswell factory at the north around to Sandtown, but my centre is directly in front of Atlanta. I will have to manœuvre some hereabouts to drive the enemy and to gain time to accumulate stores by rail to enable me to operate beyond reach of the railroad. Thus far our supplies have been ample and the country is high, mountainous, with splendid water and considerable forage in the nature of fields of growing wheat, oats and corn, but we sweep across it leaving it as bare as a desert. The people all flee before us. The task of feeding this vast host is a more difficult one than to fight. . . .”

“IN THE FIELD, NEAR ATLANTA, Geo.,

“*July 26, 1864.*

“I got your long letter and one from Minnie last night and telegraphed you in general terms that we are all well. We have Atlanta close aboard, as the

sailors say, but it is a hard nut to handle. These fellows fight like Devils and Indians combined, and it calls for all my cunning and strength. Instead of attacking the forts which are really unassailable I must gradually destroy the roads which make Atlanta a place worth having. This I have partially done, two out of three are broken and we are now manœuvring for the third.

"I lost my right bower in McPherson,<sup>1</sup> but of course it is expected, for with all the natural advantages of bushes, cover of all kinds, we must all be killed. I mean the general officers. McPherson was riding within his lines behind his wing of the army, but the enemy had got round the flank and crept up one of those hollows with bushes that concealed them completely. It has been thus all the way from Chattanooga, and if Beauregard can induce Davis to adopt the Indian policy of ambuscade which he urged two years ago, but which Jeff thought rather derogatory to the high pretenses of his cause to courage and manliness, every officer will be killed, for the whole country is a forest so

<sup>1</sup> The death of General McPherson, July 22, was a grievous personal and military loss to Sherman. Not long afterward he wrote to Mrs. Sherman: "You have fallen into an error about McPherson. He was not out of his place or exposing himself more than I and every General does daily—he was to the rear of his line, riding by a road he had passed twice that morning. The thing was an accident that resulted from the blind character of the country we are in. Dense woods fill all the ravines and hollows, and what little cleared ground there is is on the ridge levels, or the alluvion of creek bottoms. The hills are all chestnut ridges with quartz and granite boulders and gravel. You can't find an hundred acres of level, clear ground between here and Chattanooga, and not [a day] passes but what every general officer may be shot as McPherson was."

that an enemy can waylay every path and road, and could not be found.

"Poor Mac, he was killed dead instantly. I think I shall prefer Howard<sup>1</sup> to succeed him. . . ."

"IN THE FIELD, NEAR ATLANTA,

*"July 29, 1864.*

"Since crossing Chattahoochee I have been too busy to write. We have had three pretty hard battles. The enemy attacked my centre as we were fairly across the Peachtree Creek, and got badly beaten. Next as we closed in on Atlanta he struck our extreme left and the fighting was desperate. He drove back a part of the left, but the men fought hard and when night closed our losses amounted to 3,500 and we found nearly 3,000 dead rebels. Making the usual allowance the enemy must have sustained a loss of 10,000. Yesterday I shifted the Army of the Tennessee to my extreme right and in getting into position it was again attacked and repulsed the attack. The fight was mostly with the 15th Corps. Logan commanded it. McPherson's death was a great loss to me. I depended much on him. In casting about for a successor I proposed Howard who is a man of mind and intellect. He is very honest, sincere and moral even to piety, but brave, having lost an arm already. But he was a junior Major General to Hooker who took offense and has gone away. I don't regret it; he is envious, imperious and braggart. Self prevailed with him and knowing him intimately I honestly preferred Howard. Yesterday's work justified

<sup>1</sup> General O. O. Howard.

my choice, for Howard's disposition and manner elicited the shouts of my old corps, and he at once stepped into the shoes of McPherson and myself. I have now Thomas, Schofield and Howard, all tried and approved soldiers. We are gradually drawing our lines close up to Atlanta, fortifying our front against the bold sallies, and I now have all the cavalry out against the roads between Atlanta and Macon. I am glad I beat Johnston, for he had the most exalted reputation with our old army as a strategist. Hood <sup>1</sup> is a new man and a fighter and must be watched closer, as he is reckless of the lives of his men. It is wonderful with what faith they adhere to the belief that they whip us on all occasions though we have them now almost penned up in Atlanta. If no reinforcements come I think I will cut them off from all communication with the rest of the confederacy. . . .

“NEAR ATLANTA, Geo.,

“*August 2, 1864.*

“. . . I have for some days been occupying a good house on the Buckhead Road, about four miles north of Atlanta, but am going to move in the morning more to the right to be nearer where I expect the next battle. You have heard, doubtless, full accounts of the battles of the 20th, 22nd, and 28th, in all which the enemy attacked a part of our lines in force, but was always repulsed with heavy loss. But I fear we have sustained a reverse in some cavalry that I sent around by the rear to break the Macon road. It was commanded by

<sup>1</sup> On July 18 Sherman had learned that Hood had superseded Johnston in command of the Confederate forces in Atlanta.



McCook,<sup>1</sup> a cousin of Dan's. They reached the railroad and broke it; also burned a large number of the baggage wagons belonging to the enemy, and were on their way back when they were beset by heavy forces of cavalry about Newnan and I fear are overpowered and a great part killed or captured. Some 500 have got in and give confused accounts, but time enough has elapsed for the party to be back, and I hear nothing further of them. Somehow or other we cannot get cavalry. The enemy takes all the horses of the country, and we have to buy and our people won't sell. Stoneman is also out with a cavalry force attempting to reach our prisoners confined at Andersonville, but since McCook's misfortune I also have fears for his safety. I am now moving so as to get possession of the railroad out of Atlanta to the south—we already have possession of those on the north and east—when it will be difficult for Hood to maintain his army in Atlanta. This army is much reduced in strength by deaths, sickness, and expiration of service. It looks hard to see regiments march away when their time is up. On the other side they have everybody, old and young, and for indefinite periods. I have to leave also along the railroad a large force to guard the supplies; so that I doubt if our army much exceeds that of Hood. No recruits are coming, for the draft is not till September, and then I suppose it will consist mostly of niggers and bought recruits that must be kept well to the rear. I sometimes think our people do not deserve to succeed in war; they are so apathetic.

<sup>1</sup> General E. M. McCook.

"McPherson was shot dead. I had his body brought up to me, and sent it back to the railroad. He was shot high up in the breast with a bullet, and must have fallen from his horse dead. Howard, who succeeds him, is a fine gentleman and a good officer. . . . I expect we will have a hard fight for the railroad about the day after to-morrow, and [it] must be more heavy on us as we must attack. I am always glad when the enemy attacks, for the advantage then is with us. Now our line is as strong as theirs, but being on the outer circle is longer. I see that Grant has sprung his mines at Petersburg, and hope he will succeed in taking that town, as it will be a constant threat to Richmond, but Richmond itself can only be taken by regular siege. Atlanta is on high ground and the woods extend up to the forts which look strong and encircle the whole town. Most of the people are gone—it is now simply a big fort. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOS. EWING]

"IN THE FIELD, NEAR ATLANTA, Georgia,

"August 11, 1864.

"I can well understand the keen feelings of apprehension that agitate you, as you sit with mind intent on the fate of a vast machine, like the one I am forced to guide, whose life and success depend on the single thread of rails that for near five hundred miles lies within an hostile or semi-hostile country. I assure you that to the extent of my ability, nothing has been left undone that could be foreseen, and for one hundred

days not a man or horse has been without ample food, or a musket or gun without adequate ammunition. I esteem this a triumph greater than any success that has attended me in battle or in strategy, but it has not been the result of blind chance. At this moment I have abundant supplies for twenty days, and I keep a construction party in Chattanooga that can in ten days repair any break that can be made to my rear. I keep a large depot of supplies at Chattanooga and Allatoona, two mountain fastnesses which no cavalry force of the enemy can reach, and in our wagons generally manage to have from ten to twenty days' supplies.

"I could not have done this without forethought beginning with the hour I reached Nashville. I found thousands of citizens actually feeding on our stores on the plea of starvation, and other citizens by paying freights were allowed to carry goods, wares and merchandise, to all the towns from Nashville to Chattanooga; also crowds of idlers, sanitary agents, Christian commissions, and all sorts of curiosity hunters loading down our cars. It was the Gordian Knot and I cut it. People may starve, and go without, but an army cannot and do its work. A howl was raised, but the President and Secretary of War backed me, and now all recognize the wisdom and humanity of the thing. Rosecrans had his army starving at Chattanooga, and I have brought an army double its size 138 miles further, and all agree that they were never better fed, clothed and supplied. I think you may rest easy on that score.

"My only apprehension arises from the fact that the time of the three year men is expiring all the time, and

daily regiments are leaving for home, diminishing my fighting force by its best material; and the draft has been so long deferred, and the foolish law allowing niggers and the refuse of the South to be bought up and substituted on paper (for they never come to the front) will delay my reinforcements until my army on the offensive, so far from its base, will fall below my opponent's, who increases as I lose. I rather think to-day Hood's army is larger than mine, and he is strongly fortified. I have no faith in the people of the North. They ever lose their interest when they should act—they think by finding fault with an officer they clear their skirts of their own sins of misfeasance. . . .

"The good news has just come that Farragut's fleet is in Mobile Bay, and has captured the Rebel fleet there; also that Fort Gaines which guards the west entrance to the Bay has surrendered, and some prisoners we took this morning say it was the talk in their camp that the Yankees had the City of Mobile. So all is coming round well, only we should not relax our energies or be deluded by any false hope of a speedy end to this war, which we did not begin, but which we must fight to the end, be it when it may. . . ."

On the night of September 1, General Hood evacuated Atlanta, and it became immediately possible for Sherman to make his laconic announcement to the North: "Atlanta is ours and fairly won." The long advance from Chattanooga, gallantly and skilfully obstructed through nearly four months of fighting even more violent and constant than these letters have sug-

gested, was at last accomplished. The astonishing success of Sherman's army fixed the eyes of the country more than ever upon its commander.

On September 17 he wrote to his wife:

"I have had some sharp correspondence with Hood<sup>1</sup> about expelling the poor families of a brave people, which correspondence in due time will become public, and I take the ground that Atlanta is a conquered place and I propose to use it purely for our own military purposes which are inconsistent with its habitation by the families of a brave people. I am shipping them *all*, and by next Wednesday the town will be a real military town with no women boring me every order I give. Hood no doubt thought he would make capital out of the barbarity, etc., but I rather think he will change his mind before he is done."

<sup>1</sup> In this correspondence, Sherman wrote: "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it." (*Memoirs*, II, 126.) Before Sherman's death in 1891, the more familiar saying, "War is hell," began to be ascribed to him. He could not recall having uttered it, and caused a search of newspapers and other reports to be made, in vain. It may have been dropped in conversation, or in one of his informal talks to military gatherings; this he did not deny. Indeed, W. F. Hinman's *Story of the Sherman Brigade* (1897) records (p. 333) his having spoken the words at a reunion of his brother's Brigade at Caldwell, O. Inquiry at that place has confirmed the report through the recollection of a veteran. Yet on the completion of St. Gaudens's equestrian statue in New York, Sherman's coining of the phrase was not thought to be so clearly established as to permit the sculptor's use of the following admirable quatrain by Dr. Henry van Dyke:

"This is the soldier brave enough to tell  
The glory-dazzled world that War is hell:  
Lover of peace, he looks beyond the strife,  
And rides through hell to save his country's life."  
(*Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1904.)

For two months from the taking of Atlanta there was enough and to spare of occupation for Sherman in reorganizing his army, directing the operations against the forces of Hood still within fighting distance of Atlanta, and preparing for the next great move, the March to the Sea. "I will then make the interior of Georgia feel the weight of war."<sup>1</sup> So he wrote on October 17 to General Schofield. This was no sudden expression of a vengeful spirit, but merely the utterance of an old belief that until the full weight of war should be felt, the war would continue, and that true mercy lay in hastening the end. From letters written during the days of preparation for the most famous of Sherman's marches the following passages are taken:

"ATLANTA, *October 11, 1864.*

"We are all well. Forrest is threatening our road in Tennessee but I think ample steps are in progress to meet and defeat him. Should he temporarily destroy our road we are well prepared with accumulated supplies here, and our repairing facilities are so distributed that breaks can be speedily repaired. Should Hood's main army attempt our rear I think we can make him suffer. Georgia is now open to me and steps are being perfected at other and distant points that will increase the value of my position here.

"The telegraph brings me word that Grant is not idle about Richmond. I know his perseverance and have no apprehensions that in the end he will [not] worry Lee out. Sheridan's success up the valley of

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, II, 157.



the Shenandoah will again threaten Lee's line of supply which is by Gordonsville and Lynchburg, also that same road is being attacked at a point further west from another quarter. I am in advance of all the other columns and therefore should not be in a hurry, but if the enemy is restless I may go ahead. Our men are now well classified, well rested and ready to go wherever I lead.

"The people of the South have made a big howl at my moving the families of Atlanta, but I would have been a silly fool to take a town at such cost and left it in the occupation of a helpless and hostile people. The War Department has simply been silent, has not committed itself one way or the other, so that the whole measure rests on me, but I am used to such things. Some of the correspondence between Hood and myself has been published, and the whole has been sent to Washington where at some day it will also be published and I think Gen'l Hood will have no reason to glorify. I have letters of thanks from the Mayor of Atlanta and Col. ———<sup>1</sup> who was the Confederate officer appointed to receive the families and transport them to the south. Instead of robbing them, not an article was taken away, not even the negro servants who were willing to go away. And we even bought the provisions which I know to have been Confederate stores distributed to the people at the last moment and were really our captured property."

<sup>1</sup> Blank in MS. The *Memoirs* (II, 545) show this officer to have been Col. Clare. His letter is there printed.

"IN THE FIELD, SUMMERVILLE, Geo., *October 19, 1864.*

". . . Hood is afraid to fight me in open ground and therefore he tries to break up the railroad which supplies my Army. First Forrest got across the Tennessee, but never reached the Chattanooga Road. Next, Hood with three Corps, about 40,000 men, swung round by Dallas and broke the road at Big Shanty to Kenesaw. He stole a march on me of one day, and his men, disencumbered of baggage, move faster than we can. I have labored hard to cut down wagons, but spite of all I can do officers surround me. All the campaign I slept without a tent, and yet doctors and teamsters and clerks and staff officers on one pretext or another get tents and baggage, and now we can hardly move. I'll stop this or dispense with doctors, clerks and staff officers as 'useless in war.' Hood got up as far as the Tunnel before I could head him off, but at Resaca I broke through the Gap and he at once commenced to move south, and is now beyond my reach. He may now try to enter Tennessee by way of Decatur. I shall make proper dispositions and if seconded can keep him south, but I cannot get anybody to move as quickly as they should, save some of my old favorites. Corse saved Allatoona, by obeying promptly a message sent him by signals over the head of Hood's army. Mower is also coming to me and when I move south I shall have some smart columns. I am not going to stand on the defensive and you will soon hear of me on a bigger road than that to Meridian. Unless things take a turn not anticipated, you will have to get used to being without letters from me for some time, as it will be impossible to keep up mails much further. . . ."

"GAYLESVILLE, Ala., *October 21, 1864.*

". . . Since I have become famous for taking Atlanta and writing independent letters I get the most wonderful medley that you can conceive of from all parts of the world. Some are amusing, but all breathe the utmost respect and cannot be disregarded. Some I toss in the camp fire, and some I answer, but usually in a very hasty, imperfect manner; but it seems that my letters now even are sought after like hot cakes.

"As long as I am not a candidate I hope none will be published as samples of literary composition. You can read my letters and guess at the meaning, but judging from my copy clerks, some readers would make an awful jumble of my letters, written usually in the small hours of the night, by a single candle on a box. Actually, one man wrote that it was seriously contemplated even to put me up for President!

"That was cruel and unkind. You remember when the solemn Committee waited on me at San Francisco to tender the Regular Democratic nomination for Treasurer my answer was that I was ineligible because I had not graduated at the 'Penitentiary.'<sup>1</sup> If a similar committee should be rash enough to venture the other nomination I fear I should proceed to personal violence, for I would receive a sentence to be hung and damned with infinitely more composure than to be the executive of this nation. I send you a few letters that may interest you as samples. . . .

"This Army is now ready to march to Mobile, Savannah or Charleston, and I am practising them in

<sup>1</sup> See p. 142.

the art of foraging and they take to it like ducks to water. They like pigs, sheep, chickens, calves and sweet potatoes better than rations. We won't starve in Georgia. Our mules are doing better on the corn fields than on the bagged corn brought by the railroad. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

"IN THE FIELD, GAYLESVILLE, Ala., *October 26, 1864.*

". . . Sheridan, as you rightly say, the poor Irish boy of Perry County, is also making his mark. I applied once to Governor Dennison to make him a Colonel, and he would not—but Sheridan is like Grant, a persevering terrier dog and won't be shaken off. He too, is honest, modest, plucky and smart enough. It is strange that to Ohio sons, Grant, Sheridan and Sherman, the State has given the cold shoulder, so that neither of them claims it as their home, though the state of their nativity. . . ."

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"GAYLESVILLE, Ala., *October 27, 1864.*

". . . I expect very soon now to attempt another feat in which I think I shall succeed, but it is hazardous and you will not hear from me for months. The War Department will know my whereabouts, and the Rebels, and you will be able to guess. . . .

"You ask my opinion of McClellan. I have been much amused at similar inquiries of John and others in answer to a news paragraph that I pledged ninety-nine

votes of the hundred to McClellan. Of course this is the invention of some knave. I never said such thing. I will vote for nobody, because I am not entitled to vote. Of the two, with the inferences to be drawn at home and abroad, I would prefer Lincoln, though I know that McClellan, Vollandigham or even Jeff Davis if President of the U. S. would prosecute the war, and no one with more vigor than the latter. But at the time the howl was raised against McClellan I knew it was in a measure unjust, for he was charged with delinquencies that the American people are chargeable for. Thus, how unjust to blame me for any misfortune now when all the authorities and people are conspiring to break up the Army till the election is over. Our armies vanish before our eyes and it is useless to complain because the election is more important than the war. Our armies are merely paper armies. I have 40,000 Cavalry on paper but less than 5,000 in fact. A like measure runs through the whole, and so it was with McClellan. He had to fight partly with figures. Still I admit he never manifested the simple courage and manliness of Grant, and he had too much staff, too many toadies, and looked too much to No. 1. When I was in Kentucky he would not heed my counsels, and never wrote me once, but since I have gained some notoriety at Atlanta and the papers announced, as usually falsely, that I was for him, he has written me twice and that has depreciated him more in my estimation than all else. He cannot be elected. Mr. Lincoln will be, but I hope it will be done quick, that voters may come to their regiments and not give the Rebels the advantage they know so well

to take. I believe McClellan to be an honest man as to money, of good habits, descent, and of far more than average intelligence, and therefore I never have joined in the hue and cry against him. In revolutions men fall and rise. Long before this war is over, much as you hear me praised now, you may hear me cursed and insulted. Read history, read Coriolanus, and you will see the true measure of popular applause. Grant, Sheridan and I are now the popular favorites, but neither of us will survive this war. Some other must rise greater than either of us, and he has not yet manifested himself. . . .”

The march from Atlanta to the sea began on November 15. The anticipated period when letters could not reach the North because Sherman left behind him no means of communication lasted a full month. It was characteristic of him, on reaching Savannah, to provide his wife at once with this simple account of one of the most memorable undertakings of the Civil War:

“NEAR SAVANNAH, *December 16, 1864.*

“I have no doubt you have heard of my safe arrival on the coast. . . . We came right along living on turkeys, chickens, pigs, bringing along our wagons loaded as we started with bread, etc. I suppose Jeff Davis will now have to feed the people of Georgia instead of collecting provisions of them to feed his armies. We have destroyed nearly two hundred miles of railroad and are not yet done. As I approached Savannah I found every river and outlet fortified. The Ogeechee



River emptying into Ossabaw Sound was best adapted to our use, but it was guarded by Fort McAllister which has defied the Navy for two years. I ordered Howard to carry it with one division. The detail fell on the 2nd Division of the 15th Corps, and it was the handsomest thing I have seen in this war. The division is the same I commanded at Shiloh in which Buckland, Hildebrand, Cockerill and others were, and Cockerill's Regiment was about the first to reach the interior and is now its garrison, but Cockerill is not in service now. As soon as we got the fort I pulled down the bay and opened communications. General Foster and Admiral Dahlgren received me, manned the yards and cheered, the highest honor at sea. They had become really nervous as to our safety, and were delighted at all I told them of our easy success. I can now starve out Savannah unless events call my army to Virginia. I would prefer to march through Columbia and Raleigh, but the time would be too long, and we may go by sea. I have letters from Grant of the 3rd and 6th. I never saw a more confident army. The soldiers think I know everything and that they can do anything. The strength of Savannah lies in its swamps which can only be crossed by narrow causeways all of which are swept by heavy artillery. I came near being hit the first day in approaching too near to reconnoitre. A negro's head was shot off close by me. The weather is and has been all we could have asked. It is now warm and pleasant, and the live-oaks are sublime; japonicas in blossom in the open air and the orange is but slightly touched by the frost. I expect rain soon and have heavy details at

work corduroying the roads in anticipation of such an event. I have some heavy guns coming from Port Royal, and as soon as they come I shall demand the surrender of Savannah, but will not assault, as a few days will starve out its garrison, about 15,000, and its people 25,000. I do not apprehend any army to attempt to relieve Savannah except Lee's, and if he gives up Richmond it will be the best piece of strategy ever made, to make him let go there. We have lived sumptuously—turkeys, chickens and sweet potatoes<sup>1</sup> all the way, but the poor women and children will starve. All I could tell them was, if Jeff Davis expects to found an empire on the ruins of the South, he ought to afford to feed the people. . . .

“It was just 30 days from Atlanta till I was sitting with the Admiral on a sea steamer at sea. Grant's letter of the 3rd proposed to bring you down to see me, but his of the 6th looked to my coming to James River. Await events and trust to fortune. I will turn up where and when you least expect me. . . .”

The remaining letters from Savannah reflect more fully the satisfaction which Sherman, with all the world singing his praises and his own heart telling him what he had done, could not but feel in the outcome of his great undertaking. “Like one who has walked a nar-

<sup>1</sup> These words bear a curious testimony to the accuracy of a stanza in one of the most familiar of war-songs:

“How the darkeys shouted when they heard the joyful sound!  
How the turkeys gobbled which our commissary found!  
How the sweet potatoes even started from the ground  
While we were marching through Georgia!”

row plank," he wrote before the end of the year, "I look back and wonder if I really did it." The last of the Savannah letters, January 15, was written two weeks before Sherman set out on the northward march, which in his own opinion put his powers to a severer test than that which the March to the Sea had afforded.

"SAVANNAH, *December 25, 1864.*

"This is Christmas Day and I hope truly and really that you and the little ones may enjoy it, in the full knowledge that I am all safe after our long March. I am at this moment in an elegant chamber of the house of a gentleman named Green. This house is elegant and splendidly furnished with pictures and statuary. My bed room has a bath and dressing room attached which look out of proportion to my poor baggage. My clothing is good yet and I can even afford a white shirt. It would amuse you to see the negroes; they flock to me, old and young, they pray and shout and mix up my name with that of Moses, and Simon and other scriptural ones as well as 'Abram Linkom,' the Great Messiah of 'Dis Jubilee.'

"There are many fine families in this city, but when I ask for old and familiar names, it marks the sad havoc of war. The Goodwins, Teffts, Cuylers, Habershams, Laws, etc., etc., all gone or in poverty, and yet the girls remain, bright and haughty and proud as ever. There seems no end but utter annihilation that will satisfy their hate of the 'sneaking Yankee' and 'ruthless invader.' They no longer call my army, 'Cowardly Yanks,' but have tried to arouse the sympathy of the

civilized world by stories of the cruel barbarities of my army. The next step in the progress will be, 'for God's sake spare us; we must surrender.' When that end is reached we begin to see daylight, but although I have come right through the heart of Georgia they talk as defiantly as ever. I think 'Thomas' whipping at Nashville coupled with my March will take some conceit out of them.

"I have no doubt you hear enough about 'Sherman' and are sick of the name, and the interest the public takes in my whereabouts leaves me no subject to write about. Charley<sup>1</sup> and Dayton<sup>2</sup> promise to write details. All I can do is to make hasty scrawls assuring you of my health and eternal affection."

[TO THE HON. THOS. EWING]

"SAVANNAH, Geo., *December* 31, 1864.

"I have received yours of the 18th, and by Christmas day you must have heard that my army had possession of Savannah and all its Forts which have heretofore defied the Navy and the expeditions hitherto sent against it. I ought to have caught its garrison but the swampy ground prevented my reaching the Causeway on the South Carolina shore, but if Hardee had given me two more days I would have closed that also. As it was, however, *only* his men escaped, and with Savannah I got all the guns, stores and gun-boats which made it formidable. Of course I feel a just pride in the satis-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sherman's brother, General Charles Ewing.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel L. M. Dayton, aide-de-camp on Sherman's staff.

faction you express, and would rather please and gratify you than all the world beside. I know full well that I enjoy the unlimited confidence of the President and Commander in Chief, and better still of my own army. They will march to certain death if I order it, because they know and feel that night and day I labor to the end that not a life shall be lost in vain. I always ignore secondary objects and strike at principals with a foreknowledge that the former follow the latter, nor are my combinations extra hazardous or bold. Every movement I have made in this war has been based on sound military principle, and the result proves the assertion. At Atlanta I was not to be decoyed from the fruits of my summer's work, by Hood's chasséeing to the left, but I sent my oldest lieutenant in whom I had confidence (Thomas) to Tennessee, and give him a liberal part of my veterans and *all my recruits*, which I knew would enable him to cope with Hood defensively, as also hold the vital parts of former conquests: there again has my judgment been verified by events. Nor was I rash in cutting loose from a base and relying on the country for forage and provisions. I had wagons enough loaded with essentials, and beef cattle enough to feed on for more than a month, and had the Census statistics showing the produce of every county through which I designed to pass. No military expedition was ever based on sounder or surer data.

"Besides, my Army has by time and attention acquired too much personal experience and adhesion to disintegrate by foraging or its incident disorganizing tendency. I have just reviewed my four Corps and

challenge competition for soldierly bearing and behavior. No city was ever occupied with less disorder or more system than this of Savannah, and it is a subject of universal comment that though an army of 60,000 men lay camped around it, women and children of an hostile people walk its streets with as much security as they do in Philadelphia. I attach much importance to these little matters, as it is all important our armies should not be tainted by that spirit of anarchy that threatened the stability of our government, but on the contrary that when war does end we may safely rest the fabric of government if necessary on the strong and safe base of a well disciplined army of citizens. . . ."

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"SAVANNAH, Geo., *January 2, 1865.*

". . . I am now in a magnificent mansion living like a gentleman, but soon will be off for South Carolina and then look out for breakers. You may count on my being here till the 15th. I have not yet had one word from you since you knew of my having reached the coast, and only know of the death of our little boy<sup>1</sup> by the New York papers of December 22, but was in a measure prepared for it by your letter received at Kingston. I suppose you feel his loss far more than I do because I never saw him, but all the children seemed to be so attached to him that you may be so grieved at his death you cannot write to me. I know by the same

<sup>1</sup> Writing from Kingston, Georgia, on June 12, 1864, Sherman had acknowledged the news of the birth of this child.



source that you are now at South Bend in Mr. Colfax' <sup>1</sup> house. It must be very cold up there. It is really cold here, though the sun shines warm and the trees have green leaves. Of course no snow, but ice found in the gutters and on the pond. General Barnard got here last night from General Grant with dispatches, which I have answered, and the clerks are copying my letters and as soon as finished I will send a flat steamer to Port Royal whence a sea steamer will go to City Point and thence this letter will be sent you. . . .

"I see that the State of Ohio talks of making me a present of a home, etc.<sup>2</sup> For myself I would accept nothing, but for you and the children I would be willing, especially if such a present were accompanied as in Farragut's place, with bonds enough to give interest to pay taxes. My pay would not enable me to pay taxes on property. I have received from high sources highest praises and yesterday, New Year, was toasted, etc., with allusions to Hannibal, Cæsar, etc., etc., but in reply I turned all into a good joke by saying that Hannibal and Cæsar were small potatoes as they had never read the New York *Herald*, or had a photograph taken. But of course, I feel a just pride in the confidence of my army, and the singular friendship of General Grant, who is almost childlike in his love for me. It does seem that time has brought out all my old friends, Grant, Thomas, Sheridan, etc. All sorts of people send me presents and I hope they don't slight you or the girls. I want little

<sup>1</sup> Schuyler Colfax, at this time Speaker of the House of Representatives, lived at South Bend, Ind.

<sup>2</sup> This present was never received.

in that way, but I think you can stand a good deal. Thus far success has crowned my boldest conceptions and I am going to try others quite as quixotic. It may be that spite of my fears I may come out all right. Love to all."

"SAVANNAH, *January 5, 1865.*

"I have written several times to you and to the children. Yesterday I got your letter of December 23, and realize the despair and anguish through which you have passed in the pain and sickness of the little baby I never saw. All spoke of him as so bright and fair that I had hoped he would be spared to us to fill the great void in our hearts left by Willy, but it is otherwise decreed and we must submit. I have seen death in such quantity and in such forms that it no longer startles me, but with you it is different, and 'tis well that like the Spaniards you realize the fact that our little baby has passed from the troubles of life to a better existence. I sent Charley off a few days ago to carry to General Grant and to Washington some important despatches, but told him he must not go farther than Washington as by the time he returns I will be off again on another raid. It is pretty hard on me that I am compelled to make these blows which are necessarily trying to me, but it seems devolved on me and cannot be avoided. If the honors proffered and tendered me from all quarters are of any value they will accrue to you and the children. John writes that I am in everybody's mouth and that even he is known as my brother, and that all the Sher-mans are now fêted as relatives of me. Surely you and

the children will not be overlooked by those who profess to honor me. I do think that in the several grand epochs of this war, my name will have a prominent part, and not least among them will be the determination I took at Atlanta to destroy that place, and march on this city, whilst Thomas, my lieutenant, should dispose of Hood. The idea, the execution and strategy are all good, and will in time be understood. I don't know that you comprehend the magnitude of the thing, but you can see the importance attached to it in England where the critics stand ready to turn against any American general who makes a mistake or fails in its execution. In my case they had time to commit themselves to the conclusion that if I succeeded I would be a great general, but if I failed I would be set down a fool. My success is already assured, so that I will be found to sustain the title. I am told that were I to go north I would be fêted and petted, but as I have no intention of going, you must sustain the honors of the family. I know exactly what amount of merit attaches to my own conduct, and what will survive the clamor of time. The quiet preparation I made before the Atlanta Campaign, the rapid movement on Resaca, the crossing the Chattahoochee without loss in the face of a skilful general with a good army, the movement on Jonesboro, whereby Atlanta fell, and the resolution I made to divide my army, with one part to take Savannah and the other to meet Hood in Tennessee, are all clearly mine, and will survive us both in history. I don't know that you can understand the merit of the latter, but it will stamp me in years to come, and will be more appre-

ciated in Europe than in America. I warrant your father will find parallel in the history of the Greeks and Persians, but none on our continent. For his sake I am glad of the success that has attended me, and I know he will feel more pride in my success than you or I do. Oh that Willy were living! how his eyes would brighten and his bosom swell with honest pride if he could hear and understand these things. . . .

"You will doubtless read all the details of our march and stay in Savannah in the papers, whose spies infest our camps, spite of all I can do, but I could tell you thousands of little incidents which would more interest you. The women here are, as at Memphis, disposed to usurp my time more from curiosity than business. They had been told of my burning and killing until they expected the veriest monster, but their eyes were opened when Hardee, G. W. Smith and McLaws, the three chief officers of the Rebel army, fled across the Savannah river consigning their families to my special care. There are some very elegant people here, whom I knew in better days and who do not seem ashamed to call on the 'vandal chief.' They regard us just as the Romans did the Goths and the parallel is not unjust. Many of my stalwart men with red beards and huge frames look like giants, and it is wonderful how smoothly all things move, for they all seem to feel implicit faith in me not because I am strong or bold, but because they think I know everything. It seems impossible for us to go anywhere without being where I have been before. My former life from 1840 to 1846 seems providential and every bit of knowledge then acquired is returned,

tenfold. Should it so happen that I should approach Charleston on that very ground where I used to hunt with Jim Poyas, and Mr. Quash, and ride by moonlight to save daytime, it would be even more strange than here where I was only a visitor. Col. Kilburn arrived here from Louisville yesterday, and begged me to remember him to you. I continue to receive letters, most flattering, from all my old friends and enclose you two, one from General Hitchcock and one from Professor Mahan. Such men do not flatter and are judges of what they write. . . ."

"SAVANNAH, Geo., *January 15, 1865.*

". . . It may be some days yet before I dive again beneath the surface to turn up again in some mysterious place. I have a clear perception of the move, but take it for granted that Lee will not let me walk over the track without making me sustain some loss. Of course my course will be north. I will feign on Augusta and Charleston, avoid both and make for Columbia, Fayetteville and Newbern, N. C. Don't breathe, for the walls have ears, and foreknowledge published by some mischievous fool might cost many lives. We have lived long enough for men to thank me for keeping my own counsels, and keeping away from armies those pests of newspaper men. If I have attained any fame it is pure and unalloyed by the taint of parasitic flattery and the result is to you and the children more agreeable, for it will go to your and their benefit more than all the surface flattery of all the newspaper men of the country. Mr. Stanton has been here and is cured of that Negro non-

sense which arises, not from a love of the Negro but a desire to dodge service. Mr. Chase and others have written to me to modify my opinions, but you know I cannot, for if I attempt the part of a hypocrite it would break out at each sentence. I want soldiers made of the best bone and muscle in the land, and won't attempt military feats with doubtful materials. I have said that slavery is dead and the Negro free, and want him treated as free, and not hunted and badgered to make a soldier of, when his family is left back on the plantations. I am right and won't change.<sup>1</sup> The papers of the 11th are just in and I see Butler is out. That is another of the incubi of the army. We want and must have professional soldiers, young and vigorous. Mr. Stanton was delighted at my men and the tone which pervades the army. He enjoyed a good story, which is true, told by one of my old 15th corps men. After we reached the coast we were out of bread, and it took some days for us to get boats up. A foraging party was out and got a boat and pulled down the Ogeechee to Ossabaw and met a steamer coming up. They hailed her and got answer that it was the *Nemaha*, and had Major General Foster on board; the soldiers answered 'Oh H—l, we've got twenty-seven Major-Generals up at

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's unwillingness to weaken his army by increasing it with any but the most effective fighting men was frequently construed as an evidence of hostility to the negro. His true feeling on this subject is shown especially in the account of Stanton's visit to Savannah in the *Memoirs* (Vol. II, chap. xxii). The clear remembrance of those who knew him best warrants the belief that his knowledge of the South gave him a sympathetic understanding of the moral effect of employing negro troops, which increased his reluctance to include them in his army.



camp. What we want is hard tack.' The soldiers manifest to me the most thorough affection, and a wonderful confidence. They haven't found out yet where I have *not* been. Every place we go, they hear I lived there once, and the usual exclamation is, 'The 'Old Man' must be 'omnipresent' as well as 'omnipotent.' I was telling some officers the other day if events should carry us to Charleston I would have advantage because I know the ground, etc., etc. They laughed heartily at my innocence, for they knew I had been everywhere. But really my long sojourn in this quarter of the world from 1840 to 1846 was and is providential to me.

"I have read most of the current discourses about me, those you sent inclusive; but take more interest in the *London Spectator*, the same that reviewed my Knoxville Campaign. He is surely a critic, for he catches the real points well. The *Times* utterly overstates the cases and the Dublin papers are too fulsome. Our American papers are shallow. They don't look below the surface. I receive letters from all the great men, so full of real respect that I cannot disregard them, yet I dread the elevation to which they have got me. A single mistake or accident, my pile, though well founded, would tumble; but I base my hopes of fair fame on the opinion of my own army, and my associates. . . .

"I will surely be off in the course of this week, and you will hear of me only through Richmond for two months. You have got used to it now and will not be concerned though I think the chances of getting killed on this trip about even. If South Carolina lets me pass

across without desperate fighting, her fame is gone forever. . . .

“I would not be surprised if I would involve our government with England. I have taken all the cotton as prize of war, thirty thousand bales, equal to thirteen millions of dollars, much of which is claimed by English merchants. I disregard their consular certificates on the ground that this cotton has been notoriously employed to buy cartridges and arms and piratical ships, and was collected here for that very purpose. Our own merchants are equally culpable. They buy cotton in advance and take the chances of capture, and then claim. . . .”

## X

### THE WAR ENDED

1865

A VIVID element of the picturesque, all that contributes to song and story, has given to Sherman's march across Georgia a distinction somewhat out of proportion with the fame of his other campaigns. The Campaign of the Carolinas, which immediately followed the March to the Sea, holds a far less conspicuous place in popular knowledge and esteem. Yet the latest testimony of General Sherman's son confirms much that has been printed before: "My father always rated this campaign as his greatest military achievement, and believed that it settled the fate of the Confederacy."<sup>1</sup> "The March to the Sea," says Mr. James Ford Rhodes, "was a frolic, that northward a constant wrestling with the elements."<sup>2</sup> Leaving Savannah with sixty thousand men on February 1, 1865, Sherman reached Goldsboro, North Carolina, on March 23, having marched, in the face of a resourceful enemy, four hundred and twenty-five miles, across swamps, rivers, and mountains, and having done the Confederacy incalculable harm in

<sup>1</sup> See "General Sherman in the Last Year of the Civil War." An address delivered at the Thirty-eighth Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at St. Louis, Mo. By P. Tecumseh Sherman. Nov. 11, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> See Rhodes's *History of The United States*, Vol. V, p. 85.

the destruction of property and lines of transportation. From the last important stopping-place before reaching Goldsboro, he wrote to Mrs. Sherman as follows:

"IN THE FIELD, FAYETTEVILLE, N. C., *Sunday*,  
"March 12, 1865.

"We reached this place yesterday in good health and condition. We have had bad roads and weather but made good progress, and have achieved all I aimed to accomplish. Our main columns came through Columbia and Cheraw, South Carolina. We have had no general battle, and only skirmishes on the skirts of the army. The enemy gave ground when I moved in force. The importance of this march exceeds that from Atlanta to Savannah. South Carolina has had a visit from the West that will cure her of her pride and boasting. I sent couriers to Wilmington and a tug boat got up this morning, and I will start her back at 6 P. M. with despatches to Grant, the Secretary of War, and all my subordinate commanders. I do not intend to go to the sea shore, but will move on. I have no doubt you have all been uneasy on our account, but barring bad weather and mud we have had no trouble. . . .

"The same brags and boasts are kept up, but when I reach the path where the lion crouched I find him slinking away. My army is in the same condition as before, and seems to possess abiding confidence in its officers. It would amuse you to hear their comments on me as I ride along the ranks, but I hope you will hear the jokes and fun of war at a fitter time for amusement. Now it is too serious. I think we are bringing matters

to an issue. Johnston is restored to the supreme command and will unite the forces hitherto scattered and fight me about Raleigh or Goldsboro. Lee may reinforce him from Richmond, but if he attempts that Grant will pitch in. I can whip Joe Johnston unless his men fight better than they have since I left Savannah.

"As I rode into Columbia crowds gathered round me, composed of refugees and many officers who had escaped their prison guards and hid themselves. One of them handed me the enclosed <sup>1</sup> which is so handsomely got up that I deem it worthy of preservation. I want Lizzie to keep it. The versification is good, and I am told the music to which the prisoners set and sung it is equally so. I have never heard it sung, as the officers who composed the Glee Club in their prison at Columbia were not of the number who did escape. The author did escape and he is the one I have appointed to carry my despatches down to Wilmington tonight.

"I expect to stay here a few days in hopes to receive some bread and shoes from Wilmington. The river is now high and easily navigated, and had I time I should have no trouble in getting supplies up, but time is so important that I must 'Forward.' . . .

"It is now 2 P. M. and I have written ten letters of four pages each, orders and instructions to my commanders on the seaboard. . . ."

On March 15 the great army moved on, toward Goldsboro, where the next letter was written.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of "Sherman's March to the Sea," by Major S. H. M. Byers, later U. S. Consul-General to Italy and Switzerland.

"IN THE FIELD, GOLDSBORO, N. C.,

*"March 23, 1865.*

"I wrote you from Fayetteville. On our way thence the enemy struck our left flank and I turned on him and after three days manœuvering and fighting defeated him and drove him off towards Raleigh. The fight was near Bentonsville, 20 miles from here on the south side of the Neuse in the direction of Smithfield. I got here to-day and all the army will be in by to-morrow. Thus have I brought the army from Savannah in good order, beaten the enemy wherever he attempted to oppose our progress, and made junction with Schofield and Terry from Newbern and Wilmington on the 21st, one day later than I had appointed before leaving Savannah. It is far more difficult and important than the Savannah march. Besides the immediate results we have forced the Rebels to abandon the whole sea coast.

"I almost fear the consequences of the reputation this will give me among military men. I have received one letter from you and one from Minnie, also a vast package from everybody. I now have a staff officer, Maj. Hitchcock,<sup>1</sup> to answer them. I only have time to make general orders, and to write special letters. I must be more careful, as I find silly people to claim my acquaintance publish my letters or extracts. You know how hurriedly I always write and that I might be falsely placed by such things. I will be here some weeks. I should see Grant before assuming the offensive and I think he will come down. I could have time to run to

<sup>1</sup> Major Henry Hitchcock, judge-advocate on Sherman's staff.



Washington, but prefer to stay with my troops. It gives me great power with them to share the days and nights. I always encamp and am now in a shaky fly, open, with houses all round occupied by Rebels or staff officers. Soldiers have a wonderful idea of my knowledge and attach much of our continued success to it. And I really do think they would miss me, if I were to go away even for a week. I notice that you propose to take part in a Sanitary Fair at Chicago. I don't much approve of ladies selling things at a table. So far as superintending the management of such things, I don't object, but it merely looks unbecoming for a lady to stand behind a table to sell things. Still do as you please. I have nothing that would engross the profits—my saddlebags, a few old traps, etc. I could collect plenty of trophies but have always refrained and think it best I should. Others do collect trophies and send home, but I prefer not to do it.

“I have no doubt that you will be sufficiently gratified to know that I have eminently succeeded in this last venture, and will trust to luck that in the next still more hazardous I will be again favored. I don't believe anything has tended more to break the pride of the South than my steady persistent progress. My army is dirty, ragged and saucy. I have promised them rest, clothing and food, but the railroads have not been completed as I expected and I fear we may be troubled thereby. I am just informed that the telegraph line is finished from the sea to this place, so our lines of communication will be shortened. Strange to say we are all in fine health and condition, only a little blackened

by the pine smoke of our camp fires. I would like to march this army through New York just as it appears today, with its wagons, pack mules, cattle, niggers and bummers, and I think they would make a more attractive show than your fair. . . ."

Two days after writing this letter, Sherman set out for a meeting with Grant at City Point. Lincoln was also there, and from their joint discussion Sherman carried away the impression of the government's plans which led him a few weeks later to make the terms with Johnston which plunged him temporarily into a sea of troubles. On the way to the conference he wrote as follows to Mrs. Sherman:

"ON BOARD STEAMER *Russia*

"At Sea, *Sunday, March 26, 1865.*

"The railroad was finished yesterday into Goldsboro and I came down to Newbern and Morehead City and am now in a fleet blockade runner on my way to meet General Grant at City Point to confer on some points, when I shall forthwith go back to Goldsboro and get ready for another campaign. There is no doubt we have got the Rebels in a tight place and must not let them have time to make new plans. They abandoned all their cities to get men enough to whip me but did not succeed. They may unite Johnston and Lee, when if they make the further mistake of holding on to Richmond, I can easily take Raleigh and the Roanoke, when Richmond will be of little use to them. If Lee lets go of Richmond the people of Virginia will give up.

I regard my two moves from Atlanta to Savannah and Savannah to Goldsboro as great blows as if we had fought a dozen successful battles. At Bentonville, Johnston attempted to prevent my making a junction with Schofield, but he failed and I drove him off the field with my own army without the help of a man from Schofield, also got all my armies at Goldsboro the 21st of March, only one day from the time appointed. I will now conduct with great care another move. I have all the army I want and can take an hundred thousand if I want them. . . . The ship is pitching a good deal, we are just off Hatteras, and I cannot write more. . . .”

A full description of the interview at City Point may be found in the *Memoirs*. Immediately upon returning from it, Sherman wrote thus to his father-in-law:

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

“IN THE FIELD, GOLDSBORO, N. C.,

“*March 31, 1865.*

“. . . I have already been to see General Grant and am back before the enemy or newspaper spies revealed it. I have a clear view of another step in the game, and think I am on the right road. It does seem to me that one or two more such chasms in our enemy's ranks and resources will leave him gasping and begging for quarter. It is perfectly impossible for me in case of failure to divest myself of responsibility as all from the President, Secretary of War, General Grant, etc., seem to vie with each other in contributing to my success.

"You need not fear my committing a political mistake, for I am fully conscious of the fact that I would imperil all by any concessions in that direction. I have and shall continue to repel all advances made me of such a kind.

"I would like to see my family occasionally, but it seems impossible. It is manifest I am in the rapids and must go on till the cataract is passed and the boat in smooth water."

In the next letter to Mrs. Sherman the reader will find for himself an interesting allusion to the value which Sherman himself placed upon these informal letters as historical records.

"IN THE FIELD, GOLDSBORO, N. C.,

*"April 5, 1865.*

"I have now finished my Report and answered all letters that called for my personal action. These are being copied and sent by a courier to-morrow and then 'What next' as old Lincoln says.<sup>1</sup> That next is also thought over and it again takes me into danger and trouble, but you must now be so used to it that you can hardly care. I have no late letters from you, none since you went to Chicago, but you too are becoming a public character and the busy newspapers follow you. I see that the public authorities and citizens of Chicago paid you a public visit with speeches and music and

<sup>1</sup> When Sherman took Savannah, Lincoln wrote to him, Dec. 26, 1864: "It brings those who sat in darkness to see a great light. But what next? I suppose it would be safer if I leave Gen. Grant and yourself to decide."

that Bishop Duggan responded for you. If these give you pleasure I am glad of it for I would rather that you and the children should be benefitted by any fame I may achieve than that it should ensue to me personally. Of course as a General my case will be scrutinized very closely by men abroad as well as here, and my reputation will rather depend on their judgment than on any mere temporary applause. I have been trying to get some pay to send you, for I suppose you are 'short,' but the paymasters cannot catch up, and in a few days I will be off again. I have pay due since January 1, and yet was unable the other day to buy a pair of shoes which I need. I have those big boots you sent me from Cincinnati, but the weather is getting warm and they are too close and heavy. They stood me a good turn however on the last march when for weeks we were up to our eyes in mud and water. When we got here the army was ragged and hard up, but already our new clothing is issued, and I will challenge the world to exhibit a finer looking set of men, brawny, strong, swarthy, a contrast to the weak and sickly fellows that came to me in Kentucky three years ago. It is a general truth that men exposed to the elements don't 'catch cold,' and I have not heard a man cough or sneeze for three months, but were these same men to go into houses in a month the doctor would have half of them. Now the doctors have no employment. I myself am very well, *though* in a house for the time being, and too have the convenience of a table and chair to write, also to prevent the flaring of the candle which makes writing in a tent almost impossible. I write as usual very fast and can

keep half a dozen clerks busy in copying. Hitchcock, nephew of the General, writes private letters not needing my personal attention, such as autographs and locks of hair; Dayton the military orders, but I must of course keep up correspondence with War Department, General Grant, my army commanders, governors of states, etc., and you should be satisfied even if my letters are hasty and ill digested. You can almost trace my progress through the world by the newspapers. . . .

"I got a long letter from Bowman<sup>1</sup> last night. He is resolved to write up my campaigns, and is anxious for the most authentic records. These are contained in my Letter and Order Books. You have some up to the time of my leaving Atlanta. Webster has those from Atlanta to Savannah, and I have here the balance. I would much prefer he would wait the end of the war, but he wants to make money out of the job, and I do not object, for he says that others less capable will do the thing, and make a botch of it. He can get access to my official Reports at Washington as also those of my subordinate Reports, but the letters I daily write give the gradual unfolding of plans and events better than Reports made with more formality after the events are past. The last March from Savannah to Goldsboro, with its legitimate fruits, the capture of Charleston, Georgetown and Wilmington, is by far the most important in conception and execution of any act of my life. . . .

"I continue to receive the highest compliments from all quarters, and have been singularly fortunate in

<sup>1</sup> S. M. Bowman, with R. B. Irwin, published in 1865 his volume, *Sherman and His Campaigns*.



escaping the envy and jealousy of rivals. Indeed officers from every quarter want to join my 'Great Army.' Grant is the same enthusiastic friend. Mr. Lincoln at City Point was lavish in his good wishes, and since Mr. Stanton visited me at Savannah he too has become the warmest possible friend. Of course I could not venture north, and it accords both with my pleasure and interest to keep close with my army proper. Officers and soldiers have in my foresight and knowledge a childlike confidence that is really most agreeable. Whilst wading through mud and water, and heaving at mired wagons the soldiers did not indulge a single growl, but always said and felt that the Old Man would bring them out all right; and no sooner had we reached the Cape Fear River at Fayetteville than a little squeaking tug came puffing up the river with news, and we had hardly spread out in the camps about Goldsboro than the locomotive and train came thundering along from the sea ninety-six miles distant, loaded with shoes and pants and clothing, as well as food. So remarkable and happy a coincidence, which of course I had arranged from Savannah, made the woods resound with a yell that must have reached Raleigh. Some of our officers who escaped from the enemy say that these two coincidences made the Rebel officers swear that I was the Devil himself, a compliment that you can appreciate. But enough of this vanity, save and except always when it redounds to your advantage and pleasure. My wants are few and easily gained, but if this fame which fills the world contributes to your happiness and pleasure, enjoy it as much as possible. Oh, that Willy could hear

and see! His proud heart would swell to overflowing, and it may be that 'tis better he should not be agitated with such thoughts. . . .

"The army is now well clad and fed. Our wagons are loading and on the 10th I will haul out towards Raleigh. I need not tell you my plans, but they are good, and I do not see but the next move and one more will determine the fate of this war, not conclude it, but assure the fact that the United States has not ceased to be a nation. If we can force Lee to let go Richmond, and can whip him in open fight, I think I can come home and rest and leave others to follow up the fragments. . . ."

"IN THE FIELD, GOLDSBORO, N. C.,

*"April 9, 1865.*

". . . To-morrow we move straight against Joe Johnston wherever he may be. Grant's magnificent victories about Petersburg, and his rapid pursuit of Lee's army, makes it unnecessary for me to move further north, and I expect my course will be to Raleigh and Greensboro. I will fix up the railroad to Raleigh, but then shall cast off as my custom has been and depend on the contents of our wagons and on the resources of the country. Poor North Carolina will have a hard time, for we sweep the country like a swarm of locusts. Thousands of people may perish, but they now realise that war means something else than vain glory and boasting. If Peace ever falls to their lot they will never again invite War. But there is a class of young men who will never live at peace. Long after Lee's and

Johnston's armies are beaten and scattered they will band together as highwaymen and keep the country in a fever, begetting a Guerilla War. It may be that the Government may give us who have now been working four years a rest and let younger men follow up the sequel. I feel confident we can whip Joe Johnston quick if he stops, but he may travel back towards Georgia, and I don't want to follow him again over that long road. I wish Grant had been a few days later or I a few days sooner, but on the whole our campaigns have been good. The weather now seems settled, and if I have good roads think I can travel pretty fast. The sun is warm, the leaves are all coming out, and flowers are in bloom, about as you will have it a month hence. The entire army has new clothing, and with soap and water have made a wonderful change in our appearance. The fellows who passed in review before me with smoke-black faces, dirty and ragged, many with feet bare or wrapped in cloth, now strut about as proud as young chicken cocks, with their clean faces and bright blue clothes. All are ready to plunge again into the labor and toil and uncertainty of war. You doubtless have heard all you can stand of these matters. My health is good. . . . I send to Tommy today a hundred dollars, and now enclose you \$200, which is all I can raise and I got it of the quarter-master. I think, however, you will not suffer, but as a rule don't borrow. 'Tis more honest to steal."

Between the writing of this letter (April 9) and of the next (April 18) the events of which Sherman was so

great a part moved rapidly to important culminations. On the 11th he received from Grant the news of Lee's surrender two days before. On the 14th, the day of Lincoln's assassination, came a letter from Johnston proposing steps toward "the needful arrangements to terminate the existing war." Early in the morning of the 17th, as Sherman was starting to meet Johnston for a discussion of the terms of surrender, a telegraph operator at Raleigh handed him a cipher message announcing the President's death. He did not make its contents known even to the officers who accompanied him on the railroad journey of twenty-six miles to Durham's Station, near which the meeting with Johnston was to take place, but showed it first of all to Johnston himself, and on the 18th, in the light of his own understanding of Lincoln's attitude toward the South, made provisional terms for surrender. In the second of the two following letters to Mrs. Sherman, it will be seen that he was by no means unprepared to have his arrangements overruled at Washington.

"IN THE FIELD, RALEIGH, N. C.

*"April 18, 1865.*

"I have just got back from a long interview with General Johnston and Breckenridge, Secretary of War to the Confederacy, in which we arranged terms for the disbandment of *all* the Confederate armies from this to the Rio Grande, the submission to the national authority, etc., which I send at once to Washington for ratification, when this cruel war will be over. I can hardly realize it, but I can see no slip. The terms are all on our side.

If approved I can soon complete the details, leave Schofield here and march my army for the Potomac, there to be mustered out and paid. If I accomplish this I surely think I will be entitled to a month's leave to come and see you. The assassination of Mr. Lincoln is most unfortunate, but we ride a whirlwind and must take events as they arise. I have notice that I was embraced in the programme, but the fellow who was to do the job did not appear, and if he is not in a hurry he will be too late. I don't fear an assassin, though I would prefer, for the name of the thing, to get my quietus in a more honest way, in open manly fight. . . ."

"RALEIGH, N. C., *April 22, 1865.*

"I wrote you a hasty letter by Major Hitchcock and promised to write more at length as soon as matters settled away somewhat. I am now living in the Palace<sup>1</sup> and the Army lies around about the city on beautiful rolling hills of clear ground with plenty of water, and a budding spring. We await a reply from Washington which finishes all the war by one process or forces us to push the fragments of the Confederate Army to the wall.

"Hitchcock should be back the day after to-morrow and then I will know. I can start in pursuit of Johnston—who is about Greensboro, on short notice; but I would prefer not to follow him back to Georgia. A pursuing army cannot travel as fast as a fleeing one in its own country. Your letters have come to me in dribbles and mine will miss you, as all from Goldsboro were directed to South Bend.

<sup>1</sup> Sherman occupied the Governor's mansion at Raleigh.

"I also sent you then the Columbia flag and a Revolutionary seal for your fair. I have the circulars and have sent them out to parties to collect trophies for you, but it is embarrassing for me to engage in the business, as trophies of all kinds belong to Government, and I ought not to be privy to their conversion. Others do it, I know, but it shows the rapid decline in honesty of our people. Pillow, in the Mexican War, tried to send home as trophies a brass gun and other things such as swords and lances, and it was paraded all over the land as evidence of his dishonesty. . . .

"The present armies should all be mustered out and the Regular Army increased to 100,000 men and these would suffice to maintain and enforce order at the South. There is great danger of the Confederate armies breaking up into guerillas, and that is what I most fear. Such men as Wade Hampton, Forrest, Wirt Adams, etc., never will work and nothing is left for them but death or highway robbery. They will not work and their negroes are all gone, their plantations destroyed, etc. I will be glad if I can open a way for them abroad. Davis, Breckenridge, etc., will go abroad or get killed in pursuit. My terms do not embrace them but apply solely to the Confederate armies. All not in regular muster rolls will be outlaws. The people of Raleigh are quiet and submissive enough, and also the North Carolinians are subjugated, but the young men, after they get over the effects of recent disasters and wake up to the realization that nothing is left them but to work, will be sure to stir up trouble, but I hope we can soon fix them off. Raleigh is a very old city



with a large stone Capitol and governor's mansion called the Palace, now occupied by me and staff. They are distant about half a mile apart with a street connecting, somewhat in the nature of Washington. This street is the business street and some very handsome houses and gardens make up the town. It is full of fine people who were secesh but now are willing to encourage the visits of handsome young men. I find here the family of Mr. Badger who was with your father in Taylor's Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> He is paralyzed so as to be hardly able to walk and sits all day. He has his mind and is glad to have visitors. I have called twice. Though a moderate man he voted to go out and actually drafted one of the resolutions of Secession. His wife must be much younger than he and is a lively, interesting lady, chuck full of Washington. She was *dying* for some news, and *Harper's Magazine*. I could tell you much that might interest you, but will now merely say that if Mr. Johnson will ratify the terms I will leave Schofield here to complete the business, will start five corps for the Potomac, to march, and in person will go to Charleston and Savannah to give some necessary orders, and then go to the Potomac to receive the troops as they arrive. I may bring you and the children there to see the last final Grand Review of my Army before disbanding it. That is the dream and is possible. It will take all May to march and June to muster out and pay so that the 4th of July may witness a perfect peace.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ewing was a member both of Harrison's and of Taylor's Cabinet. It was in Harrison's Cabinet that George E. Badger was at the same time Secretary of the Navy.

My new sphere will I suppose be down the Mississippi. How would Memphis suit you as a home? The Mississippi valley is my hobby, and if I remain in the Army there is the place Grant will put me; Memphis or Nashville. But I am counting the chickens before they are hatched and must wait to see this thing out. When the war ends our labors begin, for we must organize the permanent army for the future. . . ."

Sherman's mingling of civil with military provisions in his terms with Johnston might at any time have brought about their rejection at Washington. Perhaps the season of terror and confusion following Lincoln's death may be blamed in part for the lack of consideration for Sherman's intentions and services which marked the methods of rejection. The temporary effect which his course produced in the North belongs to the commonest knowledge of this critical period.<sup>1</sup> The reciprocal effect upon Sherman himself, angry and hurt by the suspicions of his very loyalty, is clearly recorded in the *Memoirs*. It was not surprising that Sherman's resentment against Stanton and Halleck flamed forth in the following letters as it did in the public expressions of Sherman's feeling toward them. Nor was it

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sherman writing to him on April 26, reporting the general disapproval of his course, and confessing her own lack of sympathy with his leniency toward Johnston's army, added: "But my opinion of you is unaltered, and, my heart not having been set on the popular favor, I care nothing for the clamor they have raised. I *know* your motive was pure. I know you would not allow your army to be in the slightest degree imperilled by this armistice, and, however much I differ from you, I honor and respect you for the heart that could prompt such terms."

out of keeping with Johnston's largeness of view that when the first terms of capitulation were thrown over he stood ready to surrender on the same terms as those of Lee at Appomattox. The surrender was made on April 26. The following letters to Mrs. Sherman are among the last that Sherman wrote surrounded by his faithful soldiers:

"IN THE FIELD, RALEIGH, *April 28, 1865.*

"The capitulation of Johnston's army at Greensboro completes my Campaign. I leave Schofield to do the work, and have ordered the 15th and 17th, 14th and 20th corps to march to Richmond. I will go to-night to Wilmington and Charleston and Savannah to make some orders and instructions, when I will go by sea to Richmond to meet my Army. Thence it will march to Alexandria (and Washington) where I will move my headquarters to, in anticipation of mustering out the Army. It may be that while the Army is on the march from Richmond to Alexandria I can run out to Lancaster to see you all. This will be about the 15th and 20th of May, and if I could take all the family to Alexandria to witness the final scenes attending Sherman's Army it would be a price [?] in the memory to our children that would somewhat compensate for the expense and loss of time. I may be a little ahead, but think that the present volunteer army must be mustered out and a new regular army made, and the quicker the better before new complications arise.

"The mass of the people south will never trouble us again. They have suffered terrifically, and I now feel

disposed to befriend them—of course not the leaders and lawyers, but the armies who have fought and manifested their sincerity though misled by risking their persons. But the rascals who by falsehood and misrepresentation kept up the war, they are infamous. It will be difficult for anyone to tread a straight path amid these new complications, but I will do my best.

“I perceive the politicians are determined to drive the confederates into guerilla bands, a thing more to be feared than open organized war. They may fight it out. I won’t. We could settle the war in three weeks by giving shape to the present disordered elements, but they may play out their game.”

“AT SEA, STEAMER *Russia*,

“*Monday, May 8, 1865.*”

“We are now approaching Cape Henry and by nine o’clock to-night will be at Old Point, where I expect to stop an hour or so to communicate with Grant and then go on up to City Point and Petersburg to meet my Army. I have been to Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington on business connected with past affairs, and now I am free to join my army proper. I have seen the New York papers of April 24 and 28, but don’t mind them much, for it is manifest that some deviltry is on foot. The telegram of Halleck endorsed by Stanton is the worst,<sup>1</sup> but its falsity and baseness puts them at my mercy, and in a few days look out for break-

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, sent out at the height of the dissatisfaction with the terms between Sherman and Johnston, directed generals, subordinate to Sherman, to disregard his orders.

ers. This cause may delay me east a few days and I will likely accompany my Army up to Washington. At all events from this time forth I can hear from you and write to you. My latest letter is April 11, received at Raleigh. I want you to go right along, attend the Fair, and I will join you wherever you may be as soon as I can leave. We will probably all spend the summer together at Lancaster. At Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and Morehead City, officers, soldiers, sailors, and citizens paid me every sort of honor and respect, especially my old soldiers, more especially when they heard they were down on me at Washington. Now that the war is over, how brave and fierce have become the men that thousand-dollar bounties, patriotism, the appeal of generals and others would not bring out! How terribly energetic all at once Halleck became, to break my truce, cut off 'Johnston's Retreat' when he knew Johnston was halted anxious to surrender and was only making excuses to keep his own men from scattering, a thing I did not want, and a reason I reported to Halleck and Stanton before my 'Memorandum' went to Washington. Worst of all, his advice that my subordinates, Thomas, Wilson, and Stoneman, should not obey my orders. Under my orders, those Generals have done all they ever did in their lives, and it sounds funny to us to have Halleck *better* my plans and orders. But of all this hereafter. Go along as comfortably as you can. I am not dead yet, by a long sight, and those matters give me new life, for I see the cause. A breach must be made between Grant and Sherman, or certain cliques in Washington, who have a nice thing, are gone up. I

am glad Grant came to Raleigh, for he saw at a glance the whole thing and went away more than satisfied. But heaven and earth will be moved to kill us. . . . Washington is as corrupt as Hell, made so by the looseness and extravagance of war. I will avoid it as a pest house. . . .

"The Gates of the Press can't prevail with my old army against me, and in them I put my faith."

"IN THE FIELD,

"CAMP OPPOSITE RICHMOND, *May 10, 1865.*

"I wrote you on arrival from Savannah at Old Point. I got here yesterday and found my Army all in. Have seen Charley,<sup>1</sup> who is very well. We march tomorrow for Alexandria, whither I have sent my office papers. We will march slowly and leisurely and should reach Alexandria in ten or twelve days. I may have chance to write you meantime. I want you to go and attend your Fair, and say little of me, save that I regard my presence with my Army so important that I will not leave it till it is discharged or sent on new duties. I shall surely spend the summer with you, preferably at Lancaster, but will come to Chicago or wherever you may be when I can leave with propriety. This Army has stood by me in public and private dangers, and I must maintain my hold on it till it ceases to exist. All the officers and men have been to see me in camp to-day and they received with shouts my public denial of a review for Halleck.<sup>2</sup> He had ordered Slocum's

<sup>1</sup> General Charles Ewing.

<sup>2</sup> See *Memoirs*, II, 374. Sherman's refusal to accept Halleck's hospitality in Richmond is recorded on the same page.



wing to pass him in review to-day. I forbade it. Tomorrow I march through Richmond with colors flying and drums beating as a matter of right and not by Halleck's favor, and no notice will be taken of him personally or officially. I dare him to oppose my march. He will think twice before he again undertakes to stand between me and my subordinates. Unless Grant interposes from his yielding and good nature I shall get some equally good opportunity to insult Stanton. . . .

"Stanton wants to kill me because I do not favor the scheme of declaring the negroes of the South, now free, to be loyal voters, whereby politicians may manufacture just so much more pliable electioneering material. The Negroes don't want to vote. They want to work and enjoy property, and they are no friends of the Negro who seek to complicate him with new prejudices. As to the people of the South they are subjugated, but of course do not love us any more than the Irish or Scotch love the English, but that is no reason why we should assume all the expenses of their state governments. Our power is now so firmly established that we need not fear again their internal disturbances. I have papers and statistics which I will show your father in time. I showed some to Charley to-day and he perfectly agreed with me; so do all my officers. . . .

"We cannot kill disarmed men. All this clamor after Jeff Davis, Thompson and others is all bosh. Any young man with a musket is now a more dangerous object than Jeff Davis. He is old, infirm, a fugitive hunted by his own people, and none so poor as do him reverence. It will be well in June before I can expect

to leave my army. Don't attempt to come to Alexandria for I will be in a common tent, and overwhelmed with papers and business. Ord, Merritt, Crook, and all the big men of Halleck's army have been to see me, and share with me the disgust occasioned by their base betrayal of my confidence. . . ."

On May 24 Sherman's army, sixty-five thousand strong, took part in the Grand Review at Washington. On May 30 he issued his general orders taking leave of his troops, and with the final words of these orders, the present record of Sherman's part in the Civil War may well be concluded: "Your general now bids you farewell, with the full belief that, as in war you have been good soldiers, so in peace you will make good citizens; and if, unfortunately, new war should arise in our country, 'Sherman's Army' will be the first to buckle on its old armor, and come forth to defend and maintain the Government of our inheritance."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, II, 380.

# XI

## YEARS OF PEACE

1866-1891

IMMEDIATELY upon the close of the war Sherman was placed in command of the Military Division of the Mississippi (afterward Missouri) and, happy in his ability to escape from Washington, established his headquarters at St. Louis. In this post, subsequently in that of General of the Army, and still later in the eight remaining years of retirement from government service, his public and private engagements required many absences from home—whether this was St. Louis, Washington, or New York. There was important work to be done at remote points in connection with the Indian Peace Commission; there were many military gatherings to attend, for Sherman's position, personality, and prestige brought him unceasingly into demand; there were journeys for pleasure, relaxation, and private business. But the absences were less frequent and continuous than before; the letters, from the very expectation of early return, were often mere notes; and, from the very causes for the brief separations from his family, generally dealt with matters of less enduring importance than the letters already drawn upon. It is necessary, therefore, to present only a few detached

groups and fragments from the correspondence of his later years.

Sherman's detestation of politics and politicians has shown itself clearly in his war-time letters. When the war was done it became inevitable for the national leaders to give themselves to political matters. Sherman, for all his resistance, could not wholly escape. One of the episodes in which he figured, mainly through his desire to act the part of a friend toward General Grant, took him in 1866 on a futile mission to Mexico, which but for him Grant would have been forced to undertake.<sup>1</sup> There were amusing letters home about it, chiefly from Havana, where the ship bearing Sherman and his companions stopped for a week on its way to Vera Cruz. Two passages from one of these letters will suffice.

"HARBOR OF HAVANA,  
"November 19, 1866.

" . . . It is funny to see these people. They are as familiar with our country as we are ourselves, and talk as flippantly of 'El Grande Marcha' as our knowing ones, and I don't know but I am a direct descendant of Cæsar, Hannibal and Co., first cousin to the Magnific Colon (Columbus) and very like Espartero, O'Donnell and other modern Spanish heroes, of whom probably you have never heard and certainly do not care. Last night my Spanish came into play, and the minister extraordinary, etc.<sup>2</sup> stood no chance with a general.

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs*, II, 414-420.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis D. Campbell of Ohio, whom Sherman was accompanying to Mexico.

Today we must, however, cross swords with the officials and if I get through, as I doubt not, I propose to make a little turn into the interior to see some of the coffee and sugar estates. It looks funny to see in the midst of these old houses, narrow streets and people of other habits and ways, the regular Yankee omnibus, the street car, and the locomotive. Already railroads are finished, in operation, by which in two days I can travel 300 miles in the interior, a task that could not have been accomplished ten years ago in a month. No doubt Mr. Seward will one day ask me, how the opera in Havana and the sugar and coffee estates of the remote interior are connected with the mission to Mexico. I regard our mission as accomplished when we got out of Washington; get away, was all they wanted and now we are away with a splendid ship at my service I don't intend to neglect the opportunity. I have always wanted to get a good look at this island, which occupies so important a site on the map, as connected with our own country, that sooner than we expect it may be drawn into our complications. I don't want to acquire any more territory or any more of the mongrel breed that Spain has left in America, but Cuba should not be allowed to fall under French or English control. During our war Cuba was the resort of the blockade runners, and such piratical ships as the *Florida* and *Shenandoah*. Then the old Spaniards seemed to lean against us to favor the idea of a division of our country. Confederates were received here with favor and kindness.

"Now the whole case is changed. Our flag is the proudest here and we of the North, 'Federates' as we

are styled, have the finest boxes at the theatres, are invited out and fêted while the poor Confederates are hid away, and none to notice them. . . .

"These things in foreign countries are much more noticed than at home, and really our own people resident abroad have experienced more pride and joy at our success than we at home. Several ladies told me yesterday, almost with tears, that when I was marching from Atlanta to Savannah that they could not sleep, that they actually prayed, but when they heard I was in Savannah, and afterwards when the hated Charleston fell, that they could not restrain their feelings and actually kissed my picture. Of course being good looking I did not withhold the original! Breakfast is called, eight bells, and I must prepare for this day's contest. . . ."

Of greater moment is a considerable group of letters dealing with the difficulties in which Grant, Johnson, and Stanton became involved in 1867 and 1868. The divergence between the reconstruction policies of the President and of Congress grew steadily broader as the year 1867 advanced. In August Johnson endeavored to thrust Stanton out of the War Secretaryship, which he, feeling that only through him could the purposes of the Republican majority in Congress be carried out, insisted upon retaining. A week later Johnson appointed Grant Secretary *ad interim*. After Stanton's reinstatement by the Senate and Grant's retirement, in January, 1868, Sherman himself was earnestly but vainly solicited by the President to accept an appointment *ad interim*.



It was Johnson's next attempt to supersede Stanton by the appointment of General Lorenzo Thomas in February of 1868 that led immediately to the President's impeachment. As a friend of Grant, and after him the foremost figure in the army, Sherman made every effort throughout the controversy to smooth the rough places and promote the public good. The spectacles he beheld at Washington through all these stormy days must have gone far to confirm his aversion from political life. The following passages are chosen primarily for their illustration of these scenes and for what they contribute to the inner history of the time. It was a time in which Sherman was frequently called West on army or Indian business and to Washington—for the purposes set forth in these letters to Mrs. Sherman and her father.

“OMAHA, *September 13, 1867.*

“. . . Tell your father that I have purposely kept out of present complications. No doubt the same thing was intended last year when I was sent for, but I managed to get off by going to Mexico instead of Grant. I am determined not to be drawn into politics let what may follow, and to avoid such a result I would even resign and try something else again.

“Congress treated the President rudely and unfairly, and now he seems disposed to resent it, even at the risk of further strife. I don't see what the effect of the proposed impeachment of the President is to be, but the politicians of the Butler stripe will probably try it, and to suspend the President from his office pending the impeachment.

"This will be a difficult and dangerous move, but those who don't fight are always the first to provoke a quarrel. . . .

"I think if Grant can avoid the nomination he will, and that will leave us in St. Louis a long time if not for life, and I doubt if we could be better placed than we are now. I think we can arrange a pact with the Indians, but there will be more or less trouble with them as long as white men are white and Indians Indians. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, *October 7, 1867.*

"I reached the City at 6 A. M. yesterday, Sunday, and went to Willard's where I got a couple of hours' sleep, a good breakfast and then went to Grant's before he was downstairs for breakfast. This, however, he soon despatched and we walked to his office, the day being remarkably bright and cool. Of course we talked over all matters of common interest and about 11 A. M. I went to the President and found him with the Secretary of the Treasury, McCulloch. They seemed much pleased to see me, and our conversation turned naturally to the Pacific Railroad, and the Indians. Soon McCulloch left us together, and I then apologised to the President for disturbing him of a Sunday, supposing that he needed at least one day of the week for rest. He inquired after you and children but not a word of the sudden calling of me away from the West further than he thought it was good for me to come occasionally to Washington. I soon withdrew promising to call to-day, Monday, about 12. I then went to Grant's to dinner.

After which I walked up to Tom Ewing's and found the house closed, then down to the Metropolitan Hotel, where I found Mr. Stanbery.<sup>1</sup> With him I had a very full conversation in which I explained my earnest desire to escape all complications of politics, that it would do me or the country no good, but on the contrary would be an infinite source of trouble to me personally and would impair my military usefulness. He explained to me what I already knew, that the President is peculiarly sensitive to the abuse that pours in on him from all quarters, and that a word of kindness touches him in the tenderest spot. He told me that a letter I wrote him last year of general expression of good will was ever uppermost in his mind, and he told me the letter you wrote from New York was given to him, Stanbery, for delivery, that he took it to him, and the President failing his spectacles asked him, Stanbery, to read it, which he did and both were strongly impressed by it. The truth is our press universally is now so harsh and fault-finding that all people, especially the parasites here who look to the press now as the power in the land, are afraid to be even personally kind or respectful to the President, that the simplest expression of that kind comes as a drop of water to the thirsty soul. The President don't comprehend Grant, and tho' there is no breach it is manifest there is not a cordial understanding. The President claiming to be the constitutional Commander in Chief has recently in very small matters used his power, by which he vindicates no principle, yet alienates his subordinates as in the case of this order to

<sup>1</sup> Attorney-General in Johnson's Cabinet.

me. I doubt if he has any clearly defined wish for me, yet he telegraphed to me direct, when by all military usage, and by an express law, he should have ordered me through Grant, for the most excellent reason that every commander must know where his officers are and what they are about.

"To-day I shall see Mr. Johnson again, and if he pushes me, I will suggest that if he needs a War Minister in his Cabinet I will venture to name one or two very moderate Republicans who served all the war, and if he is not willing I am out, for that is all any one can expect of me. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

"ST. LOUIS, MO., *October* 18, 1867.

". . . Grant is playing the very part you assign him. He does not want to be President, told me that fifty millions of dollars would not compensate him therefor, but that events might force him spite of inclination—just such events as would 'compel him to throw himself into a breach.' If the Republicans can find a good nominee he will be content. He is not an extremist at all, but his many good officers at the South force him to the conclusion that there is necessary there some strong power to protect the negroes and union men against legal oppression, or the acts of badly disposed ex-rebels. He is frank and friendly to all well disposed men South. He is very reticent, wisely so to strangers, but open and frank with me and others he knows well. The President was mistrustful of him as

to Stanton and as to one or two points on which Grant would have satisfied him by a word, but the President did not afford him the chance.

"In my interview with the President of Thursday, he agreed to ask Grant a specific question at the Cabinet meeting of Friday, and Grant was prepared to give him an answer that would have relieved him at once, but the President did not do so. I called as soon as the Cabinet adjourned and was very sorry to learn that the President had not done as he promised. I left that day, but I see by the papers that he called in person on Saturday, and I hope he and Grant had a better understanding.

"Grant prefers no change till Congress meets, as he fills both offices<sup>1</sup> with less labor to himself than a civilian would experience in either. He has business habits and a positive answer in every case. He wants this interval to frame some laws or regulations that will so clearly define the duties of Secretary of War and Commander in Chief that in the future we will not have that intermeddling that has been so mischievous. If a successor is to be appointed he would prefer me. . . .

"On my way out I stopped to see John Sherman who confirms what you say, that if the President lets things remain as now, or does nothing looking to violence, there will be no impeachment or other violence toward him, both sides manœuvering on the next election.

"I think all sides will try to have Grant as a candidate without pledge or party, to give them another four years in which to wire-work for ultimate political power.

<sup>1</sup> General-in-Chief of the Army and Secretary of War *ad interim*.

Grant would simply allow the laws to take their course and would only use force or the Army when violence were attempted. I tried to explain to the President that he should throw on Congress the responsibility of failure, if their plan fails from inherent causes. He can't get along without a Congress to appropriate money and do a thousand other things that an Executive cannot, and when it has a two-third vote he should be quiet. Opposition or resistance only aggravates the matter. . . ."

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"WASHINGTON, *January 13, 1868.*

". . . This morning I had an interview with the President and pointed out to him a mode practicable and easy to get rid of Stanton forever, but there must be something behind the scenes, for he gave me no encouragement. Well, I have done my duty, and if Stanton is white-washed and thrust back in the office it is not my business. I want to befriend Mr. Johnson, but I cannot give my consent or assistance to bring in the Cabinet a man who may decide that the War was wrong or unnecessary. Without the possibility of good, this new phase of the case may produce conflict and confusion. Stanton ought not to be in Mr. Johnson's cabinet, yet by a vote to-day he is bound to be sustained simply because the Republicans vote to sustain their own law, and for the first time the President is justified in having a kitchen or back door cabinet instead of one that is responsible. If Stanton, after



being sustained, will resign it will accomplish good, but he and the President both are strong, stubborn, wilful men, that would embroil the world, rather than yield their point. . . .

“The fact is this matter will damage all politicians, it is a double edged sword that cuts both ways. . . .”

“WASHINGTON, *January 15, 1868.*

“. . . This morning I met Grant here at his headquarters by appointment, and we went together to see the President. The papers announce that the President expected Grant to hold on till forced to give up by a decree of the Supreme Court, but the law of Congress made Grant's appointment as Secretary of War *ad interim* cease, on the passage of the resolution by the Senate, and had he held on, he would have been liable to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for five years. To be sure, the President contends that the law is unconstitutional and void. Still, Grant by resistance would have had to run the risk. To-day the mutual explanations are full and *partially* satisfactory. I was only a listener. After I got to the War Department Stanton sent for me, and told me how much he respected me and admired me, etc., etc., all very loving, and I told him simply that I should not recall the past, but wanted the Army to be kept out of politics, etc., etc. I thought he would ask my opinion of his present status, but he did not. I should have advised him to resign. I deem it wrong to hold a cabinet office, when he knows the President don't want him, and the President will not give any orders to the army through him. But as

Secretary of War, he has by law power to sign all warrants on the Treasury, to make contracts for supplies, etc., etc., and may embarrass the service. I have done my best to cut the Gordian knot but have failed and shall do no more. The whole matter is resolved into a war between parties and neither cares or seems to care a damn for the service or the country. Instead of damaging each other, they will shake faith in our whole fabric of government. Congress is now engaged in fabricating a bill to legislate Hancock out of service because his general course in New Orleans don't suit the extremes.

"I do not hesitate to say such conduct is not legislative, not the business of the law making power, but pure vindictiveness that will react on the party, and when their time comes their friends will also be legislated out. Grant entertains the same views as I do on this point, and I have heard him strongly denounce it, for the reason that Congress has forced on the Army duties not pertaining to their profession, and now seeks to punish them by disbandment and dismissal, because their views of party matters do not please them. . . . I want to get out of this political maelstrom. Having no aspirations myself, I am made the depository of the secrets and plans of all, and unless I get away I may be embroiled between the factions. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, *January* 18, 1868.

". . . The President *again* sent for me to-day and I do not see why he and Grant both count on me somehow to cut the present Gordian knot.

"I believe Stanton ought to quit, but it is dangerous for the President to begin any fray. I thought by his disregarding my advice on Sunday he had a plan of action of his own, but from his conversation of to-day I find he has none but wants me to do it for him. I will think over it and let him know on Monday. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, *January 23, 1868.*

". . . Stanton is still in office and makes no sign of retiring. He makes no orders to the Army and therefore cannot test his power. Sooner or later this will cause and bring about a direct collision, and Congress stands ready and willing to impeach if Mr. Johnson does any positive act of breach of law. I feel for Mr. Johnson, but must say for his experience he has made some fatal mistakes. He should have taken care to have in his interest at least the half of one branch of Congress.

"With a two-thirds majority in each they have a power under the constitution. Besides Congress has all the power over the money, and can stop supplies, and thus control the Army, Navy and every branch of service. There is no escape for this dilemma except by a new election, and who is to be next President is as much of a mystery here as elsewhere. I know General Grant opposes the supplemental Reconstruction Bill, which vests him with all power, as also the proposed bills for crippling the Supreme Court and legislating Hancock out. Now if these be party measures, it is clear that he can't be a party candidate, and my conviction is that he can only be a candidate, if at all, unbiased and unpledged to any party. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

“WASHINGTON, *January 25, 1868.*

“. . . The President constantly sends for me, and asks opinions and assistance. I have shown him great personal respect, and think all of us in service should respect the office. But further than that I don't want to be involved in political combinations. Yesterday he suggested and offered to remove Stanton and appoint me *ad interim* under some law, for six months.

“1st I don't want the place.

“2d It is not to my interest to replace Stanton.

“3rd The office of Secretary of War is an ‘office’ under the law and Constitution, and a vacancy in the term of the Senate cannot be created by removal, unless at same time it be filled by and with advice of the Senate.

“4th To remove Stanton by force, or a show of force, would be the very thing the enemies of the President want.

“5th *Now* Stanton can give no order to the Army, and therefore can do no mischief. He does and can only do such things as draw warrants on the Treasury under existing appropriations.

“6th If the President wants to make an issue to go to the Supreme Court, why not let the Secretary of the Treasury refuse one of his warrants and deny that Stanton is Secretary of War, or that his restoration is made by the Tenure of Civil Office Bill?

“I know the President respects your opinion, and if you will address me a note on the above points—‘con-

fidential'—as to him, I will use it with him to escape this dilemma.

"Other points may occur to you more forcible than those stated. I did give the President the opportunity to avoid this trouble, but he declined my advice and therefore I should be exempt. . . ."

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"WASHINGTON, *January 28, 1868.*

". . . With you I sympathize with the President so far as Congress seems to attack his office, but Mr. Johnson is not a man of ability or good administration. He deals in generalities, but when he comes to apply principles to fact he is lost. On Friday he offered to appoint me Secretary of War and to remove Stanton. I doubted his power to do so, which he argued, but I asked time to see your father. On Sunday I saw your father and got him to write me a letter, which yesterday I submitted to the President with one of mine, which ends this matter. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, *January 30, 1868.*

". . . The President yesterday again wanted me to take the office of Secretary of War, but in a letter to-day I have declined pretty firmly. I have always manifested for him and his office the greatest respect, but he cannot vacate Stanton's office without personal violence and that would not do.

"Stanton's mere sitting in his office don't make him a cabinet officer, but he can do certain parts of the office

without the President's consent. I, however, rest my declination on the ground that I do not want to live in Washington. It is full of spies and slanderers who stop at nothing to make game, and I should regret even Grant's elevation as that might force me to this position. Grant tells me that he will avoid the nomination if he can, but it is doubtful if Chase can get the votes, and Grant don't want to see Pendleton come in because he was an open enemy of the war, which we *must* maintain was right. If Morton had health he would do, but he is paralyzed so as not to stand. Morgan of New York is a good man, but not a candidate. All sorts of names are bandied about, but Grant's seems to be the favorite. . . ."

[TO THE HON. THOMAS EWING]

"SAINT LOUIS, *February* 13, 1868.

". . . It surely is anomalous that so soon after a great war, our people should slide back into the habits and forms of parties managed by a comparatively small set of men, organized into caucuses of doubtful virtue. But so it is and our people seem to prefer to be governed by and through their instrumentality rather than trust to men whose sincerity at least has passed the ordeal of battle. All I hope for is that in my day, we will not be adjudged to have been Rebels.

"I got out of Washington just in time to escape that outburst and angry controversy<sup>1</sup> between the President

<sup>1</sup> Over their opposite views about Grant's obligation to continue in the office of Secretary of War *ad interim*.



and General Grant. I tried my best to make the breach unnecessary, and would have succeeded, had it not been for the mischievous agents of the New York papers who got possession of the notes of the Cabinet meeting, and who made the most of them, by wide spread publication and rubbing in of the most galling parts. As usual the correspondence will damage both parties to it, whilst the friends of each interpret the whole according to their preconceived opinions and party bias. I am out of it and shall keep out—and if, after my earnest expressed wish, the President should persevere in his purpose of drawing me in, not for my good, but for my injury, I will so interpret his action. But I hope he has dropped the subject and will leave me here, where I properly belong, and where I can do service to the Army and the country. There are already at Washington too many for use. . . .”

[TO THE SAME]

“SAINT LOUIS, MO., *February* 14, 1868.

“After I thought the danger which I have dreaded so long had passed, it has come upon me like an avalanche. The telegraph announces that the President has sent my name to the Senate as Brevet-General, and ordered a new military division of the Atlantic, with headquarters at Washington, and me to command. Now it is notorious this is a device to have me there. I don’t think the President means it in unkindness to me, but no one with shut eyes can fail to see the inevitable consequence. There are no military duties for me

there. There is no room for so many captains, and the inevitable result is collision of authority, quarrelling and conflict.

“Mr. Stanton is evidently resolved to stay in his office. General Grant, too, has extraordinary powers, which he will not moderate or surrender. The President is constitutional Commander in Chief, with a brief period of power left to him, and a Congress that deals with him as a common enemy. What good can I do in such an imbroglio? Moderation is lost—conciliation out of question, and a conflict would arouse new passions, create new parties, and would end no one can say where. I wrote the President a letter on the 27th of January, enclosing yours, which I thought would satisfy him. But as he renewed the subject verbally I wrote him one much more emphatic on the 31st, and now again another, all alleging in the strongest language consistent with a due respect for his high office, my utter abhorrence of being drawn into complications that were not of my making, and which it were ungenerous to drop me into. So impressed was I of the danger to me that just before leaving Washington I wrote a note to Mr. Stanbery asking him to use his personal influence with the President to spare me this result.

“Grant and I were bound by such ties during the war—he acted so fairly and generously by me on all occasions, when the Republicans would gladly have consigned me to infamy, and if we continue as now, are so likely to rise or fall together, that I would be mean indeed to allow myself to be used against him in the few short months remaining to President Johnson. I

have befriended the latter when I could, and have advised him when, had he heeded it, he would have avoided much of the trouble that now afflicts us all, and he infers, I suppose, that because I gave him full credit for his first efforts to reconstruct the South, on principles nearer right than have since been attempted, that I will go with him to the death, but I am not bound to do it. He never heeds any advice. He attempts to govern after he has lost the means to govern. He is like a General fighting without an army—he is like Lear roaring at the wild storm, bareheaded and helpless. And now he wants me to go with him into the wilderness. I do want peace, and do say if all hands would stop talking, and writing, and let the sun shine, and the rains fall for two or three years, we would be nearer reconstruction than we are likely to be with the three and four hundred statesmen trying to legislate amid the prejudices begotten for four centuries. I would be willing to take the Government on a contract for twenty years at half present cost, but I am not willing to be a mere attachment to a government that can have no possible use for me, save and except the small influence I might if untrammelled exercise over some of my old army followers. What heed does Congress give to past acquired name? They sweep them away as cobweb if across their path. . . . If Grant do become President then I am willing to attempt to succeed him as Commander in Chief—but if he remain as now, which he gives me an official right to infer, then I am rightfully out here, where I have a military command, and where I feel of some use. A mere residence any-

where strip of one's self-respect is a hell, which I will avoid if possible. . . .

"As the order is issued I have asked the President to modify it in part, viz. to let me select my own headquarters within the limits of the command. This is an ordinary courtesy, but would defeat his plans, still easier of execution than a square back down. In that case I would go to New York myself and leave the family just where they are, till in May, Grant will be compelled to accept or decline the nomination."

[TO THE SAME]

"SAINT LOUIS, MO., *February 22, 1868.*

"The telegraph works so fast that events keep ahead of our letters. Yours of the 18th is received, but since then the whole state of facts has changed, and I must say that I am glad I am out.<sup>1</sup> Whether I ought or ought not to have gone to Washington, it is certain that I never declined to obey the President, or questioned his authority, or treated him or his office with anything but the utmost respect. If he did not know his purpose of brevetting me, and placing me in Washington in open public rivalry with General Grant, was obnoxious to me, it was because he was so intent on his own view of things that he was oblivious to that of others.

"As to Stanton, Grant and all others mixed up in the imbroglio, I am neither champion or defendant. I

<sup>1</sup> On February 19 Johnson had acceded to Sherman's vigorous objection to promotion, and had continued him in his command of the Military Division of the Missouri, with headquarters at St. Louis.

know of my own knowledge that General Grant did strive all he could to avoid that unpleasant controversy with the President which he knew full well would be damaging both to him and the President. He was goaded on by the strictures of the newspapers, and the constant receipt of letters asking him if it was possible he had purposely betrayed the President. I would rather remain Lieutenant-General and live west of the Mississippi, than to be General or President and live in Washington. We cannot account for tastes, but such is mine. The duties of no officer is clearly defined by law, and it is impossible to get a legal opinion of the Attorney General, or any other law officer until after the fact, and until the newspapers enact the judgment. This ought not to be, but is.

“The officer, General Lorenzo Thomas, whom the President has chosen to test the law, is not over well qualified. At the beginning of the war he came near being arrested because of his leaning to Slavery. . . . Later he turned so ‘Black’ that he revealed a conversation with me had in Louisville by Secretary Cameron, under the express injunction of secrecy, and still later he came down to Vicksburg and in an address to my own troops he spoke of his power from President Lincoln to remove any officer who did not cooperate with him in raising negro troops, a threat which everybody who heard him interpreted as directed against me. I don’t care at all, but I cannot form an alliance with such men as against my old comrades in arms. . . .

“I do respect the President and the law, as much as is possible, and rather than stand in the way of its just

execution will do anything else in my power: but voluntarily I don't choose to place myself where the law officers of the Government will not advise, or where the President is powerless to protect. I think the issue will satisfy you I am right. . . ."

[TO MRS. SHERMAN]

"SANTA FÉ, N. M., *June 7, 1868.*

*"Sunday.*

" . . . I do not know yet if Grant's nomination and acceptance will make any changes in our arrangements for the summer,—think not. Unless he wants me otherwise I will stay west till he is not only elected, but actually vacates, and even then some slip may occur in promotion. My succession is not a matter of course, as the politicians consider me an impracticable and dangerous man. I don't think there can be any doubt of Grant's election, for no candidate thus far named can beat him. Dix is the best, but he is too old. Chase and Hancock have too many old charges to carry, and Pendleton was an out-and-out copperhead, and surely we of the War could not rest easy with him as a President. My own opinion is that, considering the state of the country, Grant will make the best President we can get. What we want in national politics is quiet, harmony and stability, and these are more likely with Grant than any politician I know of. . . .

"The moment a person is established in Washington friends begin to cool off and fall away, slander is let loose and is paraded in capital letters, and underhand meanness is set to work to effect change. I saw these



influences at work in Macomb's time, General Scott's and General Grant's. We may suppose this will not be the case in future, but it will always be as long as human nature remains as now. You have realized some of the annoyances even in Saint Louis, but when you come to have the newspaper publishing every time you go to church, every slander that may be started, every neglect to entertain to suit the demand of an exacting public, you will regret the day you ever got to Washington. I know the place may be pleasant enough to persons in a private station, but when the people, collectively and singly, consider every public officer their servant and menial there can be no privacy, no satisfaction.

"Yet this station may be forced on us, and we may have to endure it, because we have no choice, but I know we are far better off as we are now, than we can be at Washington. . . ."

"ST. LOUIS, MO., *July* 11, 1868.

". . . I was out last evening to Grant's farm where they are comfortably settled for the summer; almost as plainly as before the War. He has a horse and borrowed buggy, a pair of mules and ambulance borrowed of the quarter-master, and I have loaned Buck, the horse I bought for Minnie, which he likes very much.

"Next Wednesday he and I will go to Leavenworth and out on the road as far as Fort Wallace and back, be absent from here about ten days. . . .

"In Washington it is all talk, talk, and do nothing. The Republican Congress has shown little talent in

governing, but it would be dangerous to commit the Government to Seymour and Blair. Blair is reckless, especially in money matters, and Seymour was a pure copperhead during the war. Still I will do or say nothing in public. . . .

"I believe Grant will be elected in November, and that I will be called to Washington to command the Army in that month or before Congress meets, viz. after he makes his annual report. But he would not resign his commission till the 4th of March, when if the office of General be not abrogated I would be promoted and confirmed. But I will not be surprised if the office be abrogated so that his vacancy may not be filled, and that my rank would be as now. . . ."

To the uncertainties expressed in this last paragraph, time soon brought its answers, and Sherman in his *Memoirs* recorded them: "On the 4th of March General Grant was duly inaugurated President of the United States, and I was nominated and confirmed as General of the Army." It was primarily an army of peace which he was to command—the peace which he had fought so hard to bring to his country. The civil peace was not so quickly gained as the military. Now that all the errors of the Reconstruction Period have taken their place in history, it is comparatively easy to point out the things which should have been done differently, or not at all. But from all the opinions delivered at the time it would be hard to choose a wiser sentence than one which the careful reader of this chapter will have noted for himself. The surgeon who has

done his work without flinching stands aside when it is done, and yields to the healing power of nature its ancient way. The soldier is the surgeon of national ills, and the thought to which Sherman gave expression in these words is the thought of a surgeon whose intrepidity is followed by a no less needful moderation. "I do want peace," he said, "and do say if all hands would stop talking, and writing, and let the sun shine, and the rains fall for two or three years, we would be nearer reconstruction than we are likely to be with the three or four hundred statesmen trying to legislate amid the prejudices begotten for four centuries." The Sherman of peace deserves to be as clearly remembered as the Sherman of war.

From March of 1869 until November of 1883 Sherman remained General of the Army. Through this period and after it the home letters, for the reasons pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, grew more and more like those of the head of any family separated only by the normal exigencies of travel. It is not needed, therefore, to make any further explanation of devoting the remaining pages of this book to a few scattered passages presenting Sherman's impressions of events and places related to his public and private life.

The largest single group of letters in these years is made up of those which he wrote during a trip to Europe in 1871 and 1872. The picture post-card had not then arisen to absolve the traveller from all obligations of describing what he saw, and the letters abound in descriptions of scenes which the growth of foreign travel—and the cards themselves—have rendered thrice

familiar. From these excellent letters, describing also the persons and places which few travellers could have seen to such advantage as Sherman at the height of his world-wide fame, it is necessary to draw only a handful of brief passages. The letter from which the first is taken was addressed to his daughter Minnie; the other letters were to Mrs. Sherman:

“NAPLES, *February 22, 1872.*

“. . . Your mother will recall Jenny Lind, who sang at St. Louis when you were a baby. She was then quite young, fair and good-looking. When at Florence we were invited to a party at Madame Goldschmidt's, who is the self-same Jenny Lind, and she sang for us whilst her husband played the accompaniment. Of course I wanted to see Jenny Lind again, and went. She sang for us some Italian airs, and ‘Auld Allan Grey’—a Scotch song, and I really felt sorry to see the change time had wrought in her appearance and voice. As we were leaving the house, she followed me out and said, taking me most affectionately by both hands, ‘Dear General, I want you to tell your countrymen how much I love them and love America. I assure you that all the money I made in America is safely invested in Sweden in schools and in works of charity.’ I explained to her that it would be some months before I would reach America, but when I did go there I would surely repeat what she had said. She repeated the same remark more than once, I suppose to counteract a story that her husband Goldschmidt had wasted her fortune in extravagance and gambling. . . .”

“VIENNA, *June 13, 1872.*

“. . . I feel for General Grant in his sad position. When he entered his present office I believe he intended what he said—to administer his office according to his own best judgment—but he soon found that he reckoned without his host, that Congress and individual senators controlled all the details of government and that if he did not concede to senators and representatives, the appointing power, they would Johnsonize him. In trying to compromise this difficulty, he has more and more departed from his true course and now a few designing senators and members surround him and he cannot see beyond them. In other words,—as is the case here and in nearly all governments wielding power, influence and money,—a crowd of flatterers surround him and he cannot know the whole truth. Yet thus influenced he is better than Greeley who has no stability at all, no experience in government, who would listen to all sorts of theories and expedients, and be, in my judgment, the worst President any country ever had.

“The political elements of our country are fast becoming so complex, that a day seems not far distant when we can elect no President at all, or a mere stick or stone. I will none of it and prefer the ills we have rather than those that threaten us. Warner and Turner write to me they are going for Greeley, but I cannot understand why, for let Grant be what he may, Greeley surely is—or under like influences will be—worse. With Greeley as President, both army and navy would be abolished, and we would have to begin anew, for Greeley believes in the peaceful reign of editors and

preachers that would have the whole world ablaze in five years. . . .”

In another letter he wrote of Grant and Greeley:

“He [Grant] has his full share of troubles, as all the world now knows and sees, and it would be ungenerous and ungracious for me to add even a feather’s weight to his load. Whether he would be as forbearing to me or anybody else is not the question. I would prefer his reelection, because I believe Greeley would do as much if not more mischief to us, the military, for whom he has no sympathy but a positive dislike. Whilst we were fighting he actually thought we were mere tools in the hands of the editors and that we did well or ill according as we followed his many-sided advice. But let who be elected, my duty is plain and simple. The President elect must be supported and defended by the Army and Navy, utterly regardless of persons.”

In writing from Paris, July 24, 1872, to Mrs. Sherman about the possibility of her visiting Europe, he said:

“The people of Switzerland are a good, kind, virtuous people—cleanly and industrious. The Germans are headstrong and most positive, but I doubt if you could stand them in the aggregate. The French make themselves most acceptable by politeness and by affecting virtues they do not possess. Their servants are the best behaved and trained in the world, and all parts of the social machine move along without noise or friction; but with night, like moths, come out the women and men, on love and mischief intent, so that Paris is one great carousal. I do not see how American ladies can



walk the boulevards; indeed I believe they do not, but in riding they see all the affronting of women and men. These, however, are parted off by the police carefully, so that certain gardens and theatres are known to be for the one class and the others for the rest. I am certain, the conveniences, comforts of living, the ease and luxuriance of every day life, has sapped the physical strength of the French people and this is the cause of the recent defeat by the Germans.

“Their moral sense has also been shaken, and, though they talk of the day of revenge, one is more disposed to laugh than to tremble. I do not think you would like France, though the comforts and ease of living, the polite submission of the servants, male and female, the skill of the cooks, etc., would soon banish the moral and religious scruple—for in this respect, the French adhere to their forms of religion long after the substance has vanished.”

Eight days before, he had written, also from Paris, his own brief appraisal of the value of his experience abroad: “The greatest advantage I expect from my tour of Europe will be that in after years I can understand current events, and also comprehend perfectly what I read of the past history.”

In September of 1872 Sherman returned to America, and henceforth the letters are concerned wholly with native topics.

“WASHINGTON, *May 13, 1876.*

“. . . You need never fear that I will ever be infected with the poison of Presidential aspiration, on the

contrary, the place has no temptations but quite the contrary. Let Blaine,<sup>1</sup> Bristow, and Conkling, trained in that school of scandal and abuse, have the office if they want it, each in turn. . . .”

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 2, 1876.*

“. . . Blaine is terribly bothered, and the newspapers will be full of it. The testimony of yesterday may seriously affect his chances for the Cincinnati nomination. I called to see him last night. He was out, but Mrs. Blaine and Miss Dodge were there, and told me that Blaine had gone to consult some friends as to what he should do with that bundle of letters he had obtained from Mulligan. That you may better understand the case, Fisher of Boston was partner of a firm of which Mrs. Blaine's brother was one, and Mulligan was first a porter and bureau clerk. As such, he got many private letters written to Fisher. . . . Blaine finding that Mulligan was disposed to use these private letters to his damage, got possession of them, nominally to look them over, and then would not return them, claiming that they belonged to him or Fisher, and that Mulligan had no right to them. Mrs. Blaine says they contain only matters of a private nature but such as Blaine does not wish to be bandied about in the newspapers. Last night our newspapers were full of it, and doubtless this morning the same has been heralded all over the country, especially by papers that want to damage Blaine. Those who want to be President have a hard time. . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Blaine and Mrs. Sherman were cousins.

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 12, 1876.*

“I staid at my room yesterday to prepare something for the graduating class<sup>1</sup> on Wednesday, and about noon Bacon<sup>2</sup> came and told me that Blaine had fallen in the street with apoplexy, paralysis, and all kinds of complications, and was supposed to be dying. I sent him up to Mrs. Blaine with a message of sympathy and offer of services. He returned and repeated that Blaine was insensible, etc. I hurried up and found him on a bed in his front parlor, with all the windows and doors open, Mrs. Blaine and the family and doctors about his bed, and he lay on his back, with eyes fixed on the ceiling, absolutely insensible, occasionally taking a long breath and a sort of moan. To all appearances he was a dying man. I felt his pulse and hands. The pulse was good and his hands and feet warm, and by morning his limbs. It was manifest there was no paralysis. From the first I felt confident it was a sort of swoon, occasioned by carrying too much brain pressure, with the heat of day superadded. I staid a couple of hours, and called again at 4 P. M. and 8 P. M. He had turned on his side and breathed easier and Mrs. Blaine thought he had recognized her and tried to speak. I have again been there at 9 A. M. and find him still in a stupor, though he moves about naturally on his bed, and all fears of apoplexy and paralysis are gone. Walker Blaine was summoned from Yale College, is now here, and my opinion is that Blaine is seriously shocked, that the excitement of this caucus is too much for him, and

<sup>1</sup> At West Point.

<sup>2</sup> One of Sherman's aides.

this may defeat his nomination, though it will cause much sympathy. I must go to West Point tomorrow, but will meantime call at Mrs. Blaine's, offering to assist, and offering the services of my staff, but the trouble is too many people crowd the house. If any unfavorable symptoms occur I will telegraph in the morning. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 2, 1876.*

". . . There is no use concealing the fact that the country is not free from danger. Should Tilden be elected the Southern politicians, who are strong passionate men, will demand a full share of the honors and emoluments of government, and may lord it over us who were their enemies. The passions and sorrows of war are not healed enough for us to bear too much. I hope Hayes will be elected, for it will give more time for a change that may be inevitable. The Republicans have made mistakes but have not sanctioned crime. Next week will settle the question and I am anxious to have it over. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 12, 1877.*

". . . They are resolved to cut down the Army, so as afterward to increase it by new regiments commanded by the Southern officers who *deserted* in 1861. In the debates they insult us to our teeth. Saturday they voted that the Army should be reduced to 20,000 men, and that more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of these should be posted on the Texas frontier, thereby taking command of the Army and utterly ignoring the claims of the great Northwest

for protection against the savage and brave Sioux. Also they cut down the pay of *my* staff to that of their lineal rank, viz., Audenried, Tourtelotte and Bacon—from colonels to captains. The bill was aimed at Fred Grant, but they had not the courage to say so in so many words. The debates of 1860 were not as mean and vindictive as those of 1877. Last week Congress took open ground that the Army must not be used to suppress labor riots. You had better overhaul all the muskets and pistols in the attic, for a time will soon come when every householder must defend with fire-arms his own castle. This may seem absurd, but to such an ending are we drifting. Also the country will soon conclude that Congress is a nuisance to be suppressed. . . .”

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *August 1, 1878.*

“. . . As to politics I have been and prefer to be as careful as possible. Politics of party are one thing, politics affronting the existence of the government is another. On the first branch no Army officer should form or express an opinion, for he is sworn to support and maintain the lawful authorities. But when factions threaten the life of a President, as in Lincoln’s case in 1861, and as Donn Piatt threatened Hayes *en route* to the Capitol, everybody, including military officers, should speak out. Recently also in the South and in Missouri it is proclaimed to be true Democracy to justify the Rebel cause, and to ridicule and denounce the Union cause and those who fought for the government in 1865. I have heard men on the floor of Con-

gress boast of having fought against the Government, and intimate they would do so again. That is not politics but treason. I want you to read carefully the enclosed letter of Mr. Broadhead of St. Louis. He makes the case clear and distinct. Generals Cockrell and Vest are the Democratic candidates because they were Rebels and fought as such for true Democracy, whereas their opponents of the same party, Henderson and Gentry, are opposed because they were Union men, and served as such in the 'Home Guard.'

"Broadhead has since the Civil War been a Democrat, but even he cannot stand this. I do fear that unless the Union men of the North are careful, the Southern Democracy will govern the party, consequently the country, consequently Jeff Davis and his men become the patriots, whilst Mr. Lincoln and those of us who fought will be regarded and treated as traitors. This is no chimera, but is a struggle now in progress, and may lead to further strife and blood. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 11, 1879.*

". . . There is a bill in Congress for further reduction of Army officers, but [it] leaves the enlisted men at 25,000. . . . Sheridan is ten years my junior in years, and I have had supreme command ten years, and it is but fair he should have his chance. He don't ask it or want it, but there is such a principle as 'turn about fair play.' Now if this bill passes (which I hardly expect, though it is better than the one sure to come next year) I can retire with 60 p. c. of pay proper. . . ."

"After every war—of the Revolution, 1812 and



Mexico, the Army underwent the same process of 'Reduction.'

"Instead of cutting off the leg, once for good, Congress cut off the foot, then the knee, and finally at the hip joint. We are undergoing the same process now. The People who were so grateful in 1865 for military service now begrudge us every cent of pay and every ounce of bread we eat. Therefore, instead of waiting to be kicked out for age and infirmity, I think it the part of wisdom to get out gracefully with an allowance amounting to a generous pension.

"The Army Bill may not pass, but if it does I know that it will be wise to step out instead of being kicked out, as must occur in a very few years, as Harmar was, as St. Clair was, and as Scott was. Whoever expects gratitude of a Republic is simply a fool, and whatever I may be, I don't want to be adjudged *that*. This is my reason."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 24, 1880.*

"... We have just heard of the nomination of General Hancock, and the probabilities are that English of Indiana will be candidate for Vice-President. This is a strong ticket, the strongest the Democrats could possibly make, because it will divide the soldier vote, and will strip the Democrats of the fear lest the South should regain control of the country. With Hancock as President there is no danger of any rebellion, so I am well content with both nominations and can take it easy—like the fight between the bear and the husband; the wife was perfectly indifferent which should whip. . . ."

"BOSTON, *Saturday, September 10, 1881.*

" . . . This coming winter is likely to be critical by reason of Garfield's condition. If unable by reason of the debility of his wound, new questions must arise, which can only be settled practically. It is the nature of government like of individuals to be tested by every manner of infirmity. If there is a weak place it will be tested by facts, and not by argument. The Constitution does not say who is to declare the fact of 'inability.' If the Vice President is to declare when the President is disabled, and when he is to assume office, we have the lion and unicorn fighting for the crown, and as Garfield and Arthur represent two different factions of the same party, and as Congress is wonderfully situated, Democrats and Republicans equal in the Senate, there is room for a very pretty dispute, if not conflict. If Garfield can keep his brain power all right, we will pass the complication all right, and if he dies the succession will be regular and peaceful; but if Arthur pushed from behind should assume to decide the question that Garfield is disabled, and that it is for him to say that he, Arthur, must assume the office of President, we may have a pretty fight. I believe Garfield will be well enough to indicate his general purposes, and that the Cabinet will remain as now till Congress meets, to enact a law, which they have a right to do, so that this defect of the Constitution will be passed in safety. . . ."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *September 19, 1881.*

" . . . I now feel that it will be mercy for the President to die. He has suffered enough, has borne it

manfully, and is entitled to rest. I fear somewhat the political complications, for Mr. Arthur belongs to a faction of the Republican Party that must be more or less governed by men of strong wills, prejudices and passions. . . .”

“SANTA FÉ, New Mexico,

“*Sunday, September 16, 1883.*

“. . . My official career is now nearly ended, and you need not fear that I will be tempted by flattery, or a false sense of duty to embark in political life. The whole Western world recognizes the truth that since the close of the Civil War I have so used my power and office as to encourage the growth and development of the great West, giving me a hold on their respect and affections worth more than gold. I have been travelling, in three months, in beautiful cars abundantly provided with every comfort, over an extent of more than ten thousand miles of country, every mile of which is free from the danger of the savage and is being occupied by industrious families. Of course the Army has not done this, but the Army has gone ahead and prepared the way, and year by year I have followed up with words of encouragement. Every day I am reminded of little things done, or words spoken which have borne fruit. I honestly believe in this way I have done more good for our country and for the human race than I did in the Civil War. I do believe in a fair contest I could beat John Sherman or Blaine at their own game, but I repeat I shall not allow vanity or argument to sever me from the course laid down to spend our remaining days at St. Louis. . . .

"Were I to choose I would prefer a tent on the banks of Cœur d' Alene than the White House. . . ."

"ST. LOUIS, Mo.,

"November 22, 1884.

". . . The Republican Party gave the negroes full citizenship and vote, increasing the electoral vote from three-fifths to five-fifths on the theory that negroes would all be Republicans, but they simply increased the Southern vote, and afterwards by Reconstruction created a Solid South which with the disaffection of a few states surrendered the political power to the former enemy. With Mr. Lincoln disappeared the wisdom and shrewdness of the Republicans, since which time they have quarreled among themselves. . . ."

"NEW YORK, *December 27, 1884.*

". . . General Grant says my visits to him have done him more good than all the doctors. Mrs. Grant had got quite uneasy because Grant settles down into a silent moody state looking the picture of woe, but he warms up when I or any of his old comrades come to him. I am just from him now. He is doing what he should have done in 1868-9—compiling his Memoirs, and has made good progress; says they will be ready for the publisher by May of 1885. His financial condition is simply *horrid*. . . . He is counting largely on the value of his Memoirs but like most of us will discover that the publishers take 90 per cent. I would not exchange places with him for a million of dollars. Of course he and the family take comfort in the fact that

Ward is a villain and Fish a rascal—but they were full partners and each is liable for the debts and obligations of all or either. . . .”

“NEW YORK, *July 27* [1885]—*Monday*.

“. . . Fred Grant told me that in his later days his father was more and more recognizant of the truth that I had been his most loyal friend throughout his military career, that his *Memoirs* now in the hands of his publishers will have evidence to that effect, and therein he distinctly gives me entire credit for the conception and execution of the March to the Sea—and that more important campaign through the Carolinas. Fred knows there were men near *President* Grant intriguing to break the *entente cordiale* between us—that for a time they succeeded, but the more Grant came to understand the case he was convinced that I had been not only truthful but most jealous of his fame.

“Already there are whispers of doubt as to the wisdom of the choice of location for the grave and monument, but they have gone too far now to recede. I will attend the private funeral at Mt. McGregor near Saratoga, Tuesday, August 4, and the public funeral here August 8, by which time I will have seen all or nearly all my personal friends. . . .

“The *Century* and *North American Review* are persecuting me with telegrams, and personal messages to write something sensational about Grant, but I *will not*. . . .”

"5TH AVENUE HOTEL,

"NEW YORK, *June 5, 1887.*

". . . Blaine is also here, and was at breakfast at our table. . . .

"Blaine says he is much better, but he looks pale and soft, and I am sure from personal observation that he will experience large benefit by residing some months in Scotland. He told me he had accepted the Carnegie invitation which was sent him through me, was most generous and hearty, of unlimited hospitality as long as he pleased. Blaine described Carnegie's castle as not far from Edinburgh, north of the Frith of Forth, a most picturesque and salubrious place. . . .

"[I] got to my room at John Sherman's house [in Washington] about 5 P. M. and found several notes, one from Mrs. Endicott saying the President, Mrs. Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop of Boston and many others were to dine with them at 7:30 that evening, begging me to come. I answered by letter saying I had a couple of family visits to make, but if she would reserve a seat for me I would drop in and share the shank of the dinner. I did so, and joined in about nine. My seat was on the left of Mr. Endicott, Mrs. Cleveland on his right, Winthrop next her. The President was at the other end, so the conversation at our end was between Mr. Winthrop, Mrs. Cleveland and myself. My left was, I think, the wife of the new Secretary of the Treasury, Fairchild. Anyhow we made things lively. In due time the dinner was over, the ladies went to the parlor, and the gentlemen upstairs to a smoking room. This included the President,



Winthrop and most of the gentlemen. About eleven, the President went down to the parlor and the rest soon followed. Soon after Mrs. Cleveland made the move to leave. I went to say good-night. She was very handsome and gracious, said pointedly that I surely would not leave Washington without calling on her. Of course not, her wish was a 'command' to me. I inquired when; why not to-morrow? To-morrow be it then—at what hour? Between 12 and 1; all right, I will be at the White House. Of course I was punctual, and so was she. I was ushered into the Blue Parlor to which she came dressed simply, and she is really a fine sample of a well-bred young, beautiful, woman. The picture of Mrs. Hayes hung on the wall and she naturally inquired about her, and I am sure Mrs. Hayes would not find fault with my description of her, and of her sojourn in the White House. Others came in review, among them Betty Bliss, Mrs. Grant and all whom I had known. I then probably said to her what Mr. Bancroft had told me an hour before, that no bachelor president had ever been reelected, and if her husband was to have a second term it would be to the fact that he had such a wife. There was not the least particle of affectation in her manner or conversation; no posing, no seeming vanity, surely no false pride of official position. I must have been there a full hour, and took my leave. That was my only visit to the White House on that visit. . . .

"I dislike as much as any man living the seeming drift of public events, the Republicans quarreling over petty things, and the Democrats quietly and silently

combining the Solid South with the old copperheads of the North, by which they have regained the control of the national government. Although Cleveland did not help us in the Civil War, he has thus far not personally manifested any disposition to disturb the results of the War. He has admitted into the executive branch of the government, especially of the diplomatic service, too large a share of open Rebels, so that foreign governments may well infer that in the Civil War the South was right, and only was overcome by brute force and numbers. To-day not a single Union man, Republican or Democratic, represents the United States abroad. . . .

"I see the papers are abusing John Sherman for calling attention to this phase of the after war results. He is right, and it is an insult to us who fought the war that our enemies whom we defeated in arms now dominate us in peace, but somehow the right will prevail and I am willing to wait.

"Ours is a government of majorities. Majorities never fight, therefore in peace the non-combatant element of a Republic must govern. . . ."

"NEW YORK, *July 7, 1887.*

". . . There is no doubt that you must like Mollie Stark be a widow as I must start for my camp on the Cœur d' Alene. You may laugh at it as an idle fancy, but no wounded buffalo could have been more fiercely assailed by the coyotes of the plains, the hyenas of Africa, than I am by kind, uncompromising friends (nominally).

“‘Noblesse oblige’—I *had* to go to the unveiling of Garfield’s statue in Washington,—I *had to go* to West Point because from the Secretary of War to the lowest bombardier they *demand*ed my presence because I was retired and had nothing else to do; then the same demand from New Haven for a soldiers’ monument for the state of my ancestry, and which had done more in the Revolutionary War and in the Civil War than any other ‘per capita’—then to the Morristown wedding; again to Saratoga for the Army of the Potomac, each a new set of flies [?], and last this Burnside monument.

“There is and can be but a limit to human endurance. This last actually made me sick. The celebration was Monday July 4. There was *no* Sunday boat, and I rode up Saturday night *alone*, having by letter engaged a room at the Narragansett Hotel, but the inevitable ‘Committee’ was on my track and met me on arrival—escorted me to the Narragansett Hotel, where a magnificent suite of apartments was placed at my disposal. After a short nap I sought for Launt Thompson who was the artist of the Burnside monument, and we agreed to take a light carriage and reconnoitre the suburbs of Providence. One of the committee had his eye on me and asked if I had no objection to his going along. I said there was a spare seat with the driver. We started for the suburbs, visited several places of note, including the graves of Burnside and Anthony, when the carriage struck off at a tangent, and by sunset I found myself in a magnificent dwelling with many swell people, who were soon joined by others till it amounted to a party including governors, notables and fashionables. We

were seated on a beautiful balcony. On rising from a low rocking chair I felt a mist across my eyes—a sense of lassitude, never before, and held to a post. In a few minutes I begged the privilege of walking on the grass, and gradually recovered. But to me it was a new sensation, and I begged to be allowed for the privilege to return to my hotel and get a little rest before the severe ordeal of the next day—but no, the ladies had a lunch of which we must partake. This we did and then our carriage whose horses had been unharnessed was allowed to take us back some six miles to the hotel.

“Never since the ascent of Vesuvius and subsequent dining with the Grand Duchess Olga at Naples have I felt such a lassitude. The next day, July 4, was simply additional. All Rhode Island was there, we were conveyed to carriages at 9.30 A. M. I was accompanied by the principal of the committee, in an open barouche with four grey horses. The procession was four miles long and as usual made the circuit of the city—in a broiling sun, where I was compelled to sit, often with bare head, till 4½ P. M. receiving the shouts and plaudits of the multitude—winding up on a platform before which was the veiled statue of Burnside, which was duly unveiled, saluted, and orated. That over I supposed I was free to go to see Ellie<sup>1</sup> at Conanicut,—but no, a ‘lunch’—my special horror. I was in the hands of the ‘Committee,’ went, but escaped as early as possible, reached my hotel, packed my bag, and took a boat for Conanicut—thirty miles down the Bay (Narragansett). . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's daughter, Mrs. Thackara.

“NEW YORK, *August 8, 1887.*

“. . . I am willing to settle down, but that is impossible, with 4,000 Grand Army posts inviting me here there and everywhere, at the rate of twenty a week. There is no escape for this but removal to the Rocky Mountains. New York is second best, and I will risk it another year, but if I find it impossible to risk these calls, the force of which you or no one can comprehend, I will seek retirement in the Rocky Mountains. John Sherman says he could not stand this strain for three months—yet he is willing to venture to be President, which would kill any man of sensibility in a year. I have done my best, and must take the chances.”

“NEW YORK, *December 15, 1887.*

“. . . Rachel <sup>1</sup> has just gone to lunch, having waited some time for Governor Alger of Detroit who is here as a delegate to some sort of a Republican convention sitting at Chickering Hall, to arrange the preliminaries of the next presidential election. I have been approached by several to know if in any contingency my name could be used, but my answer has been, No!

“I think Blaine could be elected—John Sherman might be, on his record as a financier, because economic questions will be the burden of the canvass. I believe at the final nominating convention that Blaine and Sherman (John) will be so nearly balanced, that the ‘dark horse,’ Allison, Hawley, or Harrison, will be the nominee of the Republicans, Cleveland beyond doubt the Democratic, and the latter will win. It will take fifty years

<sup>1</sup> Sherman's youngest daughter.

for this country to fill up with natives and imported foreigners, by which time you and I will care little for the result. . . .

"I have had a fair share of risks, and old Time cannot deprive us of our past sixty years—though he may summon us any hour. We should be together for better or worse, and I know of no better place *now*, than the Fifth Avenue Hotel. . . ."

"5TH AVE. HOTEL,

"NEW YORK, *June 24, 1888.*

". . . The Chicago Convention is a muddle not creditable to the party. Notwithstanding Blaine's disclaimers his friends seem resolved to test his strength. I suppose at some time he must have written to some one of them as he did to me, that a man had no more right to decline a nomination 'than I had to disobey a military order.' In the correspondence which I retain, I admitted his argument as to party men, not as to myself who owed no party allegiance. Blaine is now in Edinburgh, and I doubt not messages are now passing under the ocean which will be revealed to-morrow at Chicago. Unless John Sherman, Harrison, Gresham, Alger and Allison can agree to-day on some one of themselves, there may be to-morrow a union formed for Blaine which he may not be able to resist. In any event the dissensions among the Republicans which should have been healed before the Convention will result in Cleveland's reelection. This is the way it looks to me. . . ."



On September 16, 1888, a little more than two months before Mrs. Sherman's death,<sup>1</sup> he wrote to her, *apropos* of a military ceremonial which he could not attend: "I have written them that I cannot go, that I am at the end of my rope; will attend my own funeral, but must be excused from others."

On February 14, 1891, Sherman himself died in New York. On the 19th the whole body of citizens paid him a rare tribute of affection and reverence as the great funeral procession, civil and military, wound through the streets. From New York his body was borne to St. Louis, where it found the resting-place he had craved beside the graves of his wife, of the child he had never seen, and of the son, Willy, whose death in the wartime had turned so much of the light of his own life into darkness.

It was indeed a life of contrasts, of dark shadows and the glories of noonday, of apparent failure and triumphant success. It cannot be expected that the letters in the foregoing pages will bring to those already familiar with Sherman and his characteristics a new conception of the man, for his nature had no secrets which time has waited to reveal. But for those who knew him and for those who knew him not, these unstudied letters, the current, faithful transcripts of the thoughts in his mind, should either refresh or make for the first time the impression of an extraordinary personality—fearless in thought and deed, unflinching of insight into himself and others, at once impulsive and far-seeing, relentless in the execution of great purposes,

<sup>1</sup> November 28, 1888.

yet tender and considerate in every personal relation. It was the good fortune both of Sherman and of his country that the turn of circumstance came not too late for the full exercise of these qualities of greatness both in the soldier and in the man.

## INDEX

- ACWORTH, GA., 294.  
 Adams, Wirt, 346.  
 Adams & Co., failure of, 146.  
 Alexandria, La., 164, 165, 169, 170, 176, 180, 181, 183, 186, 189, 190, 193.  
 Alger, Russell A., 399, 400.  
 Allison, William B., 399, 400.  
 Anderson, Gen. Robert, 30, 187, 188, 190, 191, 195, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219.  
 Anderson, Mrs. William, 30.  
 Andersonville, Ga., 305.  
*Anglo-Saxon*, U. S. transport, 253.  
 Anthony, Henry B., 397.  
 Arkansas Post, capture of, 236, 237, 270.  
 Arthur, Chester A., President of U. S., 390, 391.  
 Aspinwall, Wm. H., 139, 140.  
 Atlanta, Ga., 241; campaign against, 288, 289, 291, 293, 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306; occupied by Sherman, 308, 309, 311; 321, 325, 332, 340.  
*Atlantic*, U. S. S., 280.  
 Aubrey, F. X., 125.  
 Audenried, Col. J. C., 387.  
 Augusta, Ga., 327.  
  
 BACON, COL. JOHN M., 387.  
 Badger, George E., 347.  
 Barnard, Gen. John G., 323.  
 Barrow (La. cadet), 221.  
 Bagley, Lieut., 208.  
 Bailey, Rear-Adm. Theodorus, 42.  
 Bancroft, George, 395.  
 Banks, Gen. N. P., 212, 238; at Port Hudson, 264, 271; on the Red River, 285, 286; failure of, at Red River, 289 n., 291; 294.  
 Baton Rouge, La., 163, 186, 192, 193, 194, 281.  
 Bear Flag Republic, 101.  
  
 Beauregard, Gen. Peter G. T., 195, 200, 203, 209, 210, 211, 212, 215, 221, 226, 302.  
 Bell, John, 180.  
 Benton, Thomas H., 107, 122.  
 Bentonsville, Battle of, 334, 337.  
 Biddle, Com. James, 74, 98, 101.  
*Black Hawk*, U. S. S., 259.  
 Blaine, James G., 384, 385, 391, 394, 399, 400.  
 Blaine, Mrs. James G., 384, 385, 386.  
 Blair, Francis P., 197, 258, 259, 378.  
 Bliss, Col. W. W. S., 131.  
 Bliss, Mrs. W. W. S. (Betty Taylor), 395.  
 Bond, William Key, 12.  
 Bota Fogo Bay, 55.  
 Bowle, Dr., 260.  
 Bowman, Mrs., 140.  
 Bowman, S. M., author of *Sherman and His Campaigns*, 340.  
 Boyce, Judge Henry, 165.  
 Boyd, D. F., 285.  
 Bragg, Gen. Braxton, 168, 195, 221, 226, 232, 262, 264, 274.  
 Breckenridge, Gen. John C., 180, 221, 344, 346.  
 Bristow, Benjamin H., 384.  
 Broadhead, Mr., 388.  
 Brown, John, 57 n., 162, 163.  
 Buchanan, James, President of the U. S., 131, 178, 187.  
 Buckland, Col. R. P., 317.  
 Buell, Gen. Don C., 212, 221, 222.  
 Buena Vista, Mexico, Battle of, 102 n.  
 Bull, Mr. & Mrs., 22.  
 Bull Run, Battle of, 199, 201, 203-210, 214.  
 Burnside, Gen. Ambrose E., 218, 278, 397, 398.  
 Burton, Theodore E., *Life of John Sherman*, quoted, 172 n.

- Butler, Gen. Benjamin F., 200, 328, 359.  
 Byers, Maj. S. H. M., 333 n.
- CALHOUN, JOHN C., 7.  
 California, Sherman ordered to, 34;  
 43; proclaimed a republic, 83;  
 military situation in, 86-88, 97,  
 100; Sherman's opinion of, 105,  
 106, 108, 114; Sherman returns  
 to, 133; panic in, 146, 148;  
 Sherman again in, 152.  
*California*, steamship, 117.  
 Cameron, Simon, Sec. of War, 375.  
 Campbell, Lewis D., 356 n.  
 Canby, Gen. E. R. S., 291.  
 Cape Frio, 48.  
 Cape Horn, passage of, in the  
*Lexington*, 63-67, 71.  
 Carnegie, Andrew, 394.  
 Carson, Kit, 111.  
 Cascarones, 110.  
 Casey, James, 145.  
 Cass, Gen. Lewis, 187.  
*Central America*, wreck of the, 150,  
 151.  
 Centreville, Va., Federal Army at,  
 201, 204, 205; retreat to, after  
 Bull Run, 208, 209.  
*Century Magazine*, 145, 393.  
 Cerro Gordo, Mexico, Battle of, 107.  
 Champion Hill, Battle of, 262, 270.  
*Chancellor*, U. S. S., 235.  
 Charleston, social life of, 32; mili-  
 tary events at, 188, 190; 313, 327,  
 329, 340, 347.  
 Chase, Salmon P., Sec. of the  
 Treasury, 258, 328, 370, 376.  
 Chattahoochee River, 291, 292,  
 293, 294, 300; Sherman crosses  
 the, 301, 303, 325.  
 Chattanooga, Battle of, 276; Sher-  
 man at, 277, 288; 289, 290, 298,  
 302 n., 307, 308.  
*Cheeseman*, U. S. transport, 253.  
 Cheraw, S. C., 332.  
 Chicago, reception to Mrs. Sher-  
 man at, 338.  
 Chickamauga, Bragg defeats Rose-  
 crans at, 274.  
 Churchill, Gen., 237.  
 Cincinnati, O., 231, 232.  
 City Point, Va., Sherman, Lin-  
 coln, and Grant meet at, 336, 337,  
 341.  
 Clare, Col. W., 311.  
 Clark, John B., 172 n.
- Clay, Henry, 27, 192.  
 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 143 n.  
 Cleveland, Grover, President of  
 U. S., 394, 395, 396, 399, 400.  
 Cleveland, Mrs. Grover, 394, 395.  
 Coacoochee, Seminole chief, 17.  
 Cockerill, Col. Joseph R., 317.  
 Cockrell, Francis M., 388.  
 Colfax, Schuyler, 323.  
*Collingwood*, H. M. S., 73.  
 Columbia, S. C., 317, 327; Sherman  
 occupies, 332, 333.  
*Columbia*, U. S. frigate, 49, 53, 57.  
*Columbus*, U. S. S., 74, 98, 106.  
 Congress, struggle of, with Pres.  
 Johnson, 358-375; debates in, on  
 Army Reduction bills, 386, 387,  
 388, 389.  
*Congress*, U. S. frigate, 98.  
 Conkling, Roscoe, 384.  
 Conscrip Law of 1863, 243.  
 Cooke, Capt. Philip St. G., 97.  
 Corcovado, The, 54, 57, 59, 60.  
 Corinth, Miss., Sherman at, 219,  
 226-229; 248.  
 Corse, Gen. John M., 312.  
 Corwin, Thomas, U. S. Sen., 81.  
 Crook, Gen. George, 354.  
 Cuba, Sherman on annexation of,  
 129, 131, 357.  
*Cyane*, U. S. S., 88, 98.
- DAHLGREN, ADM. JOHN A., 317.  
*Dale*, U. S. sloop-of-war, 84, 86,  
 87.  
 Dalton, Ga., 289, 290, 296.  
 Dana, Charles A., 256.  
 Davis, Jefferson, President South-  
 ern Confederacy, 213, 214, 242,  
 269, 302, 315, 316, 318, 346, 353,  
 388.  
 Dayton, Col. L. M., 320, 340.  
*De Kalb*, U. S. S., 257.  
 Democracy, Sherman's views on,  
 189, 199, 209, 211, 212.  
 Dennison, Wm., Gov. of Ohio, 314.  
 Dix, Gen. John A., 376.  
 Dodge, Abigail (Gail Hamilton),  
 382.  
 Douglas, Stephen A., 180.  
 Duggan, Bishop James, 339.  
 Duncan, Dr., 113.  
 Duncan, William, 139.
- EMANCIPATION, Sherman's views  
 on, 178, 197, 229, 328, 353.  
*Emma*, steamboat, 157.

- Empire City*, U. S. transport, 253.  
 Endicott, William C., 394.  
 England, prospects of war with, in 1839, 6; in 1844, 26; in 1856, 142, 143; sympathy of, with the South, 198, 199, 330.  
 English, William H., 389.  
*Erie*, U. S. storeship, 98.  
*Eurydice*, H. M. S., 28.  
 Ewing, Abba, 8, 10.  
 Ewing, Gen. Charles, 8, 16, 252, 261, 320, 324, 352.  
 Ewing, Ellen Boyle. See *Sherman, Mrs. W. T.*  
 Ewing, Gen. Hugh Boyle, 4, 24, 153, 261.  
 Ewing, Philemon, 8, 15, 34, 36, 71, 116, 117, 287.  
 Ewing, Theresa, 8, 223.  
 Ewing, Hon. Thomas, 1, 15, 24, 120, 134, 142, 145, 153, 157, 225, 306, 320, 337, 362, 368, 370, 374.  
 Ewing, Gen. Thomas, Jr., 4, 153, 157, 162, 197, 198, 203, 361.  
  
 FAIRCHILD, MRS. CHARLES S., 394.  
 Farragut, Adm. David G., 308, 323.  
*Fashion*, steamship, 130.  
 Fayetteville, N. C., 327, 332, 334.  
 Fellows, Mrs., 165.  
 Fish, James D., 393.  
 Fisher, Warren, 384.  
 Fitch, ———, 283.  
*Florida*, Confederate privateer, 357.  
*Forest Queen*, U. S. transport, 235, 250.  
 Forrest, Gen. N. B., 297, 310, 312, 346.  
 Fort Cobras, Brazil, 61.  
 Fort Corcoran, 199, 203, 204, 213, 217.  
 Fort Dallas, 17.  
 Fort Gaines, Farragut takes, 308.  
 Fort Gratiot, 11.  
 Fort Leavenworth, Sherman visits, 122, 123; 157.  
 Fort McAllister, stormed, 317.  
 Fort Moultrie, Sherman stationed at, 23, 33; 187, 188.  
 Fort Pierce, Sherman's life at, 13-16.  
 Fort Riley, 153, 155.  
 Fort Sumter, 30 n., 190.  
 Fort Villegagnon, Brazil, 61.  
 Foster, Gen. J. G., 317, 328.  
  
 Frémont, Gen. John C., 43, 85, 96; questions Gen. Kearny's authority, 100, 101; 111, 122.  
 Fry, Gen. James B., 132.  
  
 GARESCHÉ, MAJOR J. P., 212.  
 Garfield, James A., President of U. S., 390, 391, 397.  
 Garrard, Gen. Kenner, 301.  
 Gaylesville, Ala., 313, 314.  
 Gentry, William, 388.  
 Giddings, Joshua, 163.  
 Gillespie, Eliza, 231.  
 Gloria, suburb of Rio Janelro, 58.  
 Gold, discovery of, in California, 117, 119; at Pike's Peak, 153, 157.  
*Golden Age*, wreck of, 138, 139.  
 Goldsboro, N. C., 332, 333, 334, 336, 337, 340, 342, 345.  
 Goldschmidt, Mme. (Jenny Lind) 380.  
 Gomez, Dolores, 90.  
 Gomez, Panchita, 91.  
 Gonzalez, Señor, 90.  
 Gordon, Mr., 123.  
 Graham, Gen. G. Mason, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 170, 172, 176, 192.  
 Grand Gulf, Miss., Grant's move on Vicksburg by way of, 247, 250; Sherman's distrust of the movement on, 251; 253, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 273.  
 Grant, Gen. Frederick D., 387, 393.  
 Grant, Gen. Ulysses S., at Shiloh, 221, 224, 225; Sherman's opinion of, 227, 228; in Vicksburg campaign, 235, 238, 244, 246, 247, 248, 252, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 263, 264, 265, 269, 270, 271, 272; 277; in command of armies west of the Alleghanies, 278, 279; appreciation of Sherman, 284; 285; made Lieut.-Gen., 286, 287; 291, 296, 297, 299, 300, 306, 310, 314, 315, 316, 317, 323, 324, 332, 334; conference of, with Sherman at City Point, 336, 337; 340, 341; his victories around Petersburg, 342; 343; receives Lee's surrender, 344; 348, 351, 352, 353, 358; Sec. of War, *ad interim*, 359, 360, 361; mentioned for Presidency, 362; 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 370, 372, 373, 374, 375; nominated, 376; 377; elected President, 378;

- unfortunate experiences in office, 381, 382; death of, 392, 393.  
 Grant, U. S., *Personal Memoirs of*, quoted, 273 n.; 392, 393.  
 Grant, Mrs. U. S., 395.  
 Greeley, Horace, 381, 382.  
 Gresham, Walter Q., 400.  
 Grenada, Miss., 238, 248, 252, 256, 273.  
 HAGGERTY, LT.-COL., 207.  
 Haines's Bluff, assault of, 238, 247, 257, 258, 260, 265, 270.  
 Halleck, Gen. Henry W., 59, 60, 222, 225, 256, 272, 287, 348; Sherman's quarrel with, 350, 351, 352, 353; 354.  
 Hampton, Wade, 346.  
 Hancock, Gen. Winfield S., 366, 367, 376, 389.  
 Hardee, Gen. William J., 320, 326.  
 Hardie, Gen. James A., 122.  
 Harmar, Gen. Josiah, 389.  
*Harper's Magazine*, 347.  
 Harrison, Benjamin, President of the U. S., 399, 400.  
 Harrison, William H., President of the U. S., 347 n.  
 Haskins, Maj. Joseph A., 186.  
 Havana, Sherman visits, 356.  
 Hawley, Gen. Joseph H., 399.  
 Hayes, Rutherford B., President U. S., 386, 387.  
 Hayes, Mrs. Rutherford B., 395.  
 Hebert, —, 168.  
 Heintzelman, Gen. Samuel P., 205.  
 Helper, Hinton R., 167, 171, 172.  
 Henderson, John B., 388.  
 Herndon, Capt., commander of the *Central America*, 150.  
 Hildebrand, Col., 317.  
 Hitchcock, Dr., 137.  
 Hitchcock, Gen. E. A., 327.  
 Hitchcock, Major Henry, 334, 340, 345.  
 Hoadley, Maj., C. S. A., 249.  
 Holliday, Thomas D., 221.  
 Hood, Gen. John B., in command of Confederate forces at Atlanta, 304, 305; evacuates Atlanta, 308; correspondence of Sherman with, 309; 311; avoids a battle, 312; defeated by Thomas at Nashville, 321; 325.  
 Hooker, Gen. Joseph, 250, 254, 271, 293; Sherman's opinion of, 303.  
*Horizon*, U. S. transport, 253.  
 Howard, Gen. Oliver O., 303, 304, 306, 317.  
 Hoyt, Charles, 108.  
 Hunter, Gen. David, 199, 205, 206, 207, 212.  
 Hurlbut, Gen. Stephen A., 281, 282.  
 IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH, THE, 167 n., 172 n.  
 Independence, Mo., Sherman visits, 122-125, 126.  
*Independence*, U. S. frigate, 74, 84, 98.  
 Indian Peace Commission, Sherman serves on, 355.  
*Indianola*, U. S. S., 241, 242.  
 Irvin, William, 4, 11.  
 Irving, Washington, 68.  
 Irwin, R. B., 340 n.  
 JACKSON, GEN. ANDREW, 131, 132.  
 Jackson, Miss., 261, 262, 267, 269, 270.  
 Jimeno, Dona Augustias, 116, 118.  
 John Sherman Brigade, 222, 309 n.  
 Johnson, Andrew, President of the U. S., 217, 347; quarrel of, with Congress, 358-375; offers Secretaryship of War to Sherman, 369; 371, 372; Sherman's opinion of, 373, 375.  
 Johnson, Col., 244.  
 Johnston, Gen. Joseph E., 209, 221; in Vicksburg campaign, 261, 262, 264, 267, 268, 269, 270; 285; in Atlanta campaign, 288, 290, 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, 299, 300, 301; superseded by Hood, 304 n.; restored to command, 333; 336; defeated at Bentonsville, 337; 342, 343; surrenders to Sherman, 344; 348 n., 349, 351.  
*Juliet*, U. S. gunboat, 280.  
 KANSAS, Sherman's opinion of, 156, 158.  
 Kearny, Gen. Stephen W., 86, 87, 88, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 122.  
 Keeler, Mary, 22.  
 Kenesaw Mountain, 297, 312.  
*Kennett, L. M.*, steamboat, 162, 163.  
 Keyes, Gen. Erasmus D., 205.  
 Kilburn, Capt. C. L., 167, 327.



- King, James, 145.  
 Kingston, Ga., 291, 322 n.
- LANCASTER, OHIO, 1, 11, 15, 121, 137, 147, 155, 162, 194, 211, 218, 274, 275 n., 349, 351, 352.
- Larangelras, Brazil, Valley of, 60.  
 Lauderdale, Fla., 16.
- Leavenworth, Kansas, 135, 153, 154, 158, 162 n., 220 n.
- Lee, Gen. Robert E., 250, 294, 297, 310, 311, 318, 333, 336, 342, 344, 349.
- Levant*, U. S. sloop-of-war, 71.
- Lexington*, U. S. S., Sherman sails for California on, 36; voyage of described, 37-82; Cape Horn rounded by, 63-66; arrives at Monterey, 84; 92 n., 94, 95, 98, 102.
- Lincoln, Abraham, President of the U. S., 180, 181, 182, 190, 191, 197, 203, 217, 225, 231, 235 n., 237, 238, 242, 246, 255, 256, 272, 276, 307, 315, 319, 337, 338 n., 341, 344, 345, 348, 375, 387, 388, 392.
- Lincoln, Willie, son of the President, 276.
- Lind, Jenny (Mme. Goldschmidt), 380.
- Loeser, Lt. Lucien, 81, 94.
- Logan, Gen. John A., 303.
- Loo-Choo*, ship, 98.
- Los Angeles (Puebla de), 86, 97, 100, 102, 111.
- Louisiana, secession of, 182, 185, 186, 193.
- Louisiana Military Academy, Sherman becomes superintendent of, 161; his conduct of, 173-179; he resigns his post at, 187.
- Lucas, James H., 144, 150.
- Lucas, James H. & Co., 151.
- Lucas, Simonds, 138.
- Lucas, Turner & Co., Sherman becomes manager for, 133; 138 n., 147, 148; suspends business, 151.
- Lynch, Rev. Fr., 32.
- Lyon, Gen. Nathaniel, 197.
- McARTHUR, GEN. JOHN, 224.
- McClellan, Gen. George B., 198; in command at Washington, 200; 211; caution of, 212, 214, 215, 216; 218; army of, disabled by absentees, 232; high professional reputation of, 249, 250; Sherman's opinion of, 314, 315, 316.
- McClelland, Gen. John A., 224, 228; in Vicksburg campaign, 235, 236, 237, 238, 242, 250, 254, 256, 257, 261, 269; Sherman's opinion of, 272.
- McCook, Gen. Alexander McD., 219.
- McCook, Gen. E. M., 305.
- McCoy, Capt. J. C., 220.
- McCulloch, Hugh, Sec. of Treasury, 360.
- McDowell, Gen. Irvin, 199, 202, 207, 209, 233.
- McFeely, —, 283.
- McLaws, Gen. Lafayette, 326.
- Macomb, Gen. Alexander, 377.
- McPherson, Gen. James B., 254, 261, 271, 282, 284, 289, 290, 292, 293, 296; death of, 302, 303, 306.
- Mahan, Prof. Asa, 327.
- "March to the Sea," 312, 316-318, 331, 333 n.
- Marcy, William L., Sec. of War, 100.
- Marietta, Ga., 297, 298, 299.
- Mason, Gen. Richard B., 97, 101, 112, 118, 119, 122, 166 n.
- Maynard, Horace, 217.
- Mazatlan, Mexico, 112, 113.
- Meigs, Henry, 146.
- Memoirs of W. T. Sherman*, referred to, 1, 17 n., 23, 36, 83, 116 n., 120, 122 n., 126 n., 138 n., 145, 146 n., 150 n., 153 n., 179 n., 187, 194, 195 n., 197 n., 219, 228 n., 235 n., 259 n., 274, 280 n., 288, 292 n., 309 n., 311 n., 328 n., 337, 348, 352 n., 354 n., 356 n., 378.
- Memphis, Tenn., 229, 231, 246, 247, 274, 277, 278, 279, 280 n., 281, 284, 297, 326, 348.
- Meridian Campaign, The, 280, 282-284, 312.
- Merritt, Gen. Wesley, 354.
- Mexican War, 26, 28-29, 31, 33, 83, 102, 105, 107, 109, 112, 116.
- Milliken's Bend, Miss., 235, 236, 242, 259.
- Minor, Lt. Charles, 81.
- Mobile, Sherman stationed at, 19-23; 282, 283, 285, 294, 297, 308, 313.
- Moderator*, U. S. transport, 253.
- Mohawk*, U. S. S., 257.

- Monday's Ferry of the Kaw, 126, 127.  
 Monterey, Cal., 43, 72, 74, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 95, 99, 102, 103, 107, 108, 110, 111, 116, 117, 119.  
 Montez, Lola, 136.  
 Moore, Thomas O., Gov. of Louisiana, 165, 183, 184, 185, 186, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195.  
 Morgan, Edwin D., 370.  
 Morgan, Gen. John, 297.  
 Morton, Oliver P., 370.  
 Mower, Gen. J. A., 312.  
 Mulligan Letters, The, 384.  
 Mun, Mr., 29.  
 Myers, Mrs., 150.
- NAPLES, 380.  
 Nashville, Tenn., Grant at, 279; Sherman at, 288, 307; Thomas wins battle of, 320.  
 Negro troops, Sherman's opinion of, 252, 328 n.  
 Nelson, Gen. William, 219.  
*Nemaha*, S. S., 328.  
 Newbern, N. C., 327, 336.  
 New Orleans, 112, 121, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 137, 167, 172, 183, 187, 190, 191, 192, 194, 238, 294, 366.  
 Newspapers, Sherman's opinion of, 227, 228, 231, 238, 240, 241, 246, 295, 361.  
 New York, 35, 67, 147, 149, 150, 152, 183, 192, 241, 394, 396, 398, 401.  
 Norris, Mr., 106, 108.  
*North American Review*, 393.
- OHIO LIFE AND TRUST Co., failure of, 147, 149.  
 Olga, Grand Duchess, 398.  
 Omaha, Neb., 359.  
 Ord, Gen. Edward O. C., 37, 39, 81, 92, 104, 269, 354.  
 Ord, Dr. James L., 92 n.
- PAGE AND BACON, 138, 146, 152.  
 Pakenham, Gen., 132.  
 Palo Alto, Mexico, Battle of, 34.  
 Panama Canal, Sherman on, 36.  
 Parédes y Arrellaga, Mariano, President of Mexico, 31.  
 Parke, Gen. J. G., 269.  
 Patterson, Gen. Robert, 200, 209.  
 Paulding, James K., 22.  
 Peachtree Creek, Battle of, 303.  
 Pendleton, George H., 370, 376.  
 Petersburg, Va., 306, 342.  
 Piatt, Donn, 387.  
 Picolata, Fla., 16.  
 Pierce, Franklin, President of the U. S., 129, 131, 178.  
 Pike's Peak, 153, 157.  
 Pillow, Gen. Gideon J., 346.  
 Pittsburg, Pa., Sherman stationed at, 34; 198.  
 Pitzman, Lt., 244, 265, 266.  
 Polk, James K., President of the U. S., 27 n., 100, 107.  
 Polk, Gen. Leonidas, 285.  
 Pope, Gen. John, 233.  
 Porter, Adm. David D., 235, 244, 256, 257, 285.  
 Port Gibson, Miss., 270.  
 Port Hudson, La., 252, 256, 264, 272.  
 Port Royal, S. C., 318, 323.  
*Portsmouth*, U. S. S., 98.  
*Preble*, U. S. S., 98.  
 Prentiss, Gen. B. M., 224.  
 Presidency, Sherman's unwillingness to accept the, 375, 383, 391, 400.  
 Price, Col. Stirling, 97.  
 Prime, Capt. Frederick E., 238, 256.  
 Providence, R. I., 397.
- QUEEN OF THE WEST, U. S. ram, 241, 242.  
 Quicaron Island, 140.
- RALEIGH, N. C., 334, 336, 342, 344, 345, 346, 349, 352.  
 Rasa Island, Brazil, 49.  
 Red River Expedition, 285, 286, 289.  
 Resaca, Ga., 290, 292, 293, 296, 325.  
 Resaca de la Palma, Mexico, Battle of, 34.  
 Rhodes, James Ford, *History of the U. S.*, quoted, 331.  
 Richmond, Va., 240, 300, 306, 310, 318, 329, 336, 349, 352 n., 353.  
 Ricketts, Gen. James B., 164.  
 Ricketts's Battery, 208.  
 Rio Janeiro, 35, 43, 48-63, 79.  
 Roelofson, Mr., 176.  
 Roler, Dr., 277.  
 Rosecrans, Gen. Wm. S., 212, 254, 271, 272, 274, 278, 279, 307.

- Russell, Mrs., 121.  
*Russia*, S. S., 336, 350.
- SAINT AUGUSTINE, FLA., Sherman at, 16, 17, 18.  
 St. Clair, Gen. Arthur, 389.  
 St. Gaudens, Augustus, 309 n.  
 Saint Louis, Mo., 120, 121, 123, 126, 128, 133, 142, 151, 152, 154, 155, 196, 197, 198, 241, 355, 360, 362, 370, 377, 380, 391, 401.  
 San Diego, Cal., 85, 86, 97, 98.  
 Saltillo, Mexico, Battle of, 96, 102.  
 San Christovao, Brazil, palace of, 56, 58.  
 San Francisco, 37, 44, 72, 87, 88, 98, 99, 100, 106, 107, 117, 118; Sherman in business at, 133-147, 152.  
 San Juan Bautista, Convent of, 104.  
 Santa Barbara, Cal., 97.  
 Santa Fé, N. M., 86, 97, 100, 101, 111, 125, 376, 391.  
 Santo Bento, Convent of, Rio Janeiro, 52.  
*Saratoga*, U. S. S., 71.  
 Savannah, Ga., 313, 316-320, 322, 324, 326, 327, 332, 334, 340, 347, 351, 352.  
*Savannah*, U. S. S., 87, 88, 98.  
 Schenk, Gen. Robert C., 205.  
 Schofield, Gen. John M., 285, 289, 293, 301, 304, 310, 334, 337, 345, 347, 349.  
 Schouler, James, *History of U. S.* quoted, 7 n.  
 Scott, Gen. Winfield, 107, 112, 119, 129, 191, 217, 377, 389.  
*Scribner's Magazine*, 220 n.  
*Sea Gull*, U. S. S., 65.  
*Seaman*, ship, 72, 73.  
 Secession, progress of, in the South, 168, 175, 180, 182, 183, 184, 186, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194; Sherman's views on, 168, 170, 179, 181-183, 185-186, 188, 189.  
 Seminole Indians, 14.  
 Seward, William H., Sec. of State, 203, 357.  
 Seymour, Adm. Sir George, 73, 77.  
 Seymour, Horatio, Gov. of New York, 378.  
 Seymour, Gen. Truman, 286.  
*Shenandoah*, Confederate privateer, 357.  
 Sheridan, Gen. Philip H., 310, 314, 316, 388.  
 Sherman, Charles Taylor (Sherman's brother), 128.  
 Sherman, Elizabeth (Sherman's sister), 36.  
 Sherman, Elizabeth (Sherman's daughter), 141.  
 Sherman, Ellie (Mrs. Thackara, Sherman's daughter), 398.  
 Sherman, Hon. John, 1, 162 n., 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 176, 203, 222, 280 n., 314, 324, 363, 391, 394, 399, 400; his brigade, 222, 309 n.  
 Sherman, Mrs. Mary Hoyt (Sherman's mother), 73, 128.  
 Sherman, Minnie (Mrs. Fitch, Sherman's daughter), 141, 276, 301, 334, 380.  
 Sherman, P. Tecumseh (Sherman's son), 331.  
 Sherman, Rachel (Mrs. Thorne-dike, Sherman's daughter), 399.  
 Sherman, Susan (Sherman's sister), 25.  
 Sherman, Thomas E. (Sherman's son), 201, 225, 343.  
 Sherman, William Tecumseh, his early life in Senator Ewing's family, 1; a cadet at West Point, 3; describes his life there, 5-12; graduates, 12; stationed in East Florida, 13; at Picolata, 16; Mobile, 19; Fort Moultrie, 23; and Pittsburg, 34; religious opinions of, 20; his love of painting, 24; determines not to resign his commission, 24; reads Blackstone, 25; views on the Mexican War, 26, 28-29; on the election of 1844, 27; ordered to California, 34; sails in the store-ship, *Lexington*, 36; describes the passage to Rio Janeiro, 36-48; and the crossing of the Equator, 45; his visit to Rio Janeiro, 49-62; and the Botanical Gardens, 55; describes the rounding of Cape Horn, 63-66; his visit to Valparaiso, 72-76; and the races there, 77; observations on the city, 78-80; reaches Monterey, 83; describes the town, 85-86; and the military situation, 86-88; attends a "representation" of the Fall of Man, 90; captures

a deserter, 94; views on the outlook in California, 95-99; and Frémont, 100, 101; hunts grizzly bear, 102; visits Convent of San Juan Bautista, 104; unfavorable impressions of California, 105, 106, 108, 114; and of Com. Stockton, 105, 106, 108; disappointment at seeing no fighting, 109, 116; on the discovery of gold, 117; goes to San Francisco, 117; sails for New York, 119; marries Miss Ewing, 120; promoted to captaincy in Commissary Department, 120; stationed at St. Louis, 121; and New Orleans, 121; visit to Fort Leavenworth, 122; and Independence, Mo., 122; entertained by Indians, 126; views on the election of 1852, 129; and the annexation of Cuba, 129, 131; visits the battlefield of New Orleans, 131; resigns his commission, engages in business in San Francisco, 133; with ill success, 133; describes San Francisco in 1853, 135-137; declines nomination for City Treasurer, 142; discusses possible war with England, 142-143; returns to New York, 147; his employers fail, 152; practises law in Leavenworth, 153; discouraging views of Kansas, 156, 158; and of his own future, 159; appointed principal Louisiana Military Academy, 161; views of the political situation, 163-173; opens the Academy, 173; his methods of discipline, 174, 175; considers a business offer from England, 176 n., 177; views on slavery, 178-179; and secession, 181-183, 185, 188; resigns his position, 187; condemns the course of Buchanan's administration, 187-191; president of a St. Louis street railway, 196; appointed Colonel of the 13th U. S. Infantry, 196; declines Chief Clerkship, War Dept., 196; in command of a brigade, 199; observations on the prospects of the war, 200; describes the battle of Bull Run, 203-209; and the lack of discipline in the army,

209, 211; commissioned a Brigadier-General, 212, 217; difficulties of his position, 214; assigned to service in Kentucky, 216; unfortunate experiences there, 219; at the Battle of Shiloh, 220-225; wounded, 220; commissioned Major-General, 226; his opinion of Grant, 227, 228; and of the conduct of the war, 229-233; stationed at Memphis, 229, 230; at the siege of Vicksburg, 234; and the capture of Arkansas Post, 237; his uncomplimentary views on the press, 238, 240, 241, 246; his comments on the strategy of the siege, 247-255; commands a feint on Haines's Bluff, 257-260; in the assaults on Vicksburg, 261-269; comments on the fall of Vicksburg, 269-273; grief at his son's death, 275-277, 280; loyalty to Grant, 278; plans the Meridian Campaign, 280; tendered a banquet at Memphis, 280; clears Mississippi of the enemy, 284; commands military division of the Mississippi, 288; plans the Atlanta Campaign, 288; at Resaca and Dalton, 290, 292, 293; strategy of his campaign, 294, 296, 298; describes devastation wrought by his army, 298, 301; defeats Johnston in three battles, 303; occupies Atlanta, 308; removes the women and children, 309, 311; his responsibility for the phrase "War is Hell," 309 n.; plans his March to the Sea, 312; opinion of McClellan, 315, 316; reaches Savannah, 316; his situation there, 318-320; success of his campaigns, 321; death of his infant son, 322, 324; his rising reputation, 324, 325, 327; on the employment of negro troops, 328; inaugurates the Carolina Campaign, 331; reaches Columbia, 332; defeats Johnston, 334; reaches Goldsboro, 334; in conference with Grant, 336, 337; moves on Raleigh, 342; receives Johnston's surrender, 344; terms rejected at Washington, 348; anger at Stanton and Halleck, 348, 350, 352; subordinates ordered

- not to obey him, 351; refuses a review of his army before Halleck, 352; in the Grand Review at Washington, 354; in command at St. Louis, 355; goes on a mission to Mexico, 356; share in the Johnston-Stanton imbroglio, 358, 360; interviews with Johnson, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368; views of the situation, 368; declines the Secretaryship of War, 369; appointed brevet-General, 371; against his wishes, 372; opinion of Johnson, 373; appointment withdrawn, 374 n.; made General of the Army, 378; his trip abroad, 379-383; comments on politics, 384-388; and on the reduction of the Army, 386-389; refuses to enter politics, 391; on the death of Grant, 392, 393; retires, 397; social engagements of his last years, 397-399; views on the campaign of 1888, 399, 400; death, 401; funeral, 401; character, 401, 402.
- Sherman, William T., Jr. (Sherman's son), 140, 201, 223, 225; death of, 274-277; 326, 341, 401.
- Sherman, Mrs. W. T., 1, 3, 10 n., 25, 36, 84, 120, 121, 134, 138, 147, 157 n., 162, 179, 187, 198, 219, 274, 302 n., 336, 338; letter from, quoted, 348 n.; 359, 380, 384 n., 400.
- Sherman Letters, The*, 1, 2, 36, 167 n., 280 n.
- Shiloh, Battle of, 219-225, 228, 232.
- Shubrick, Rear Adm. William B., 88, 96, 98, 101, 112, 113.
- Silver Wave*, U. S. transport, 250.
- Slavery, Sherman's views on, 168, 169, 178, 197, 229.
- Slidell, John, minister to Mexico, 31.
- Sloat, Com. John D., 72, 73, 83.
- Slocum, Gen. Henry W., 352.
- Smith, Gen. A. J., 285, 297.
- Smith, Francis W., 169.
- Smith, Gen. Giles, 254.
- Smith, Gen. G. W., 326.
- Smith, Gen. Morgan L., 235, 266.
- Smith, Gen. Persifor F., 118, 131, 249, 250.
- Smith, Dr. S. A., 171, 175, 186, 188, 189, 193, 194.
- Smith, Gen. T. Kilby, 242, 254.
- Smith, Gen. Wm. Sooy, 285.
- Sonora*, steamship, 137.
- Spectator*, London, 329.
- Stanbery, Henry, Attorney-Gen., 361, 372.
- Stanton, Edwin M., Sec. of War, 232, 278, 307, 327, 328, 332, 337, 344, 348, 350, 351, 353, 358, 359, 364, 365, 367, 368, 369, 372, 374.
- Star of the West*, S. S., 191.
- Staten Land, 64.
- Steele, Gen. Frederick, 236, 259.
- Stevens, John L.*, ship, 138, 139.
- Stevens, Mrs., 140.
- Stevenson, Col. John D., 88, 97, 98, 101, 102.
- Stockton, Com. Robert F., 72, 73, 85, 96, 100, 105, 106, 108.
- Stone, Gen. Charles Pomeroy, 145, 285.
- Stoneman, Gen. George, 351.
- Sumner, Gen. Edwin V., 156, 157.
- Susan Drew*, ship, 99.
- Sweeney, Gen. T. W., 293.
- TAYLOR, CAPT. J. T., 220 n.
- Taylor, Major, 283.
- Taylor, Gen. Richard, 195.
- Taylor, Gen. Zachary, Mexican campaign of, 96, 107, 111, 112, president of the U. S., 120, 131 n., 347 n.
- Tennessee, Army of the, Sherman in command of, 279; in the Atlanta campaign, 303.
- Terry, Gen. A. H., 334.
- Third U. S. Artillery, Sherman commissioned in, 13; at the battle of Saltillo, 102 n.; 120.
- Thomas, Gen. George H., 218, 219, 285; commands Sherman's centre, 289, 293, 304; defeats Hood at Nashville, 320; 321, 323, 325, 351.
- Thomas, Gen. Lorenzo, 252, 256, 359, 375.
- Thompson, Jacob, 353.
- Thompson, Launt, 397.
- Tierra del Fuego, 65.
- Tigress*, U. S. transport, 253.
- Tilden, Samuel J., 386.
- Times*, London, 329.
- Tompkins, Capt. Christopher Q., 81.



- Tourtelotte, Col. J. E., 387.  
 Travis, I. D., *History of Clayton-Bulwer Treaty*, 143 n.  
 Trent affair, 79.  
 Tumlin, Col. Lewis, 292.  
 Turner, Major, 142, 144, 188, 194, 381.  
 Tuttle, Gen. J. M., 259.  
 Twiggs, Gen. David E., 130.  
 Tyler, John, President of the U. S., 15.  
 Tyler, Gen. Robert O., 201, 202, 204, 206.
- VALLANDIGHAM, CLEMENT L., 315.  
 Valparaiso, 35, 60, 63, 67, 70, 71; Sherman's description of, 72-76; horse-races at, 77; native costumes observed at, 78, 79; evil resorts of, 80.  
 Van Dyke, Henry, 309 n.  
 Van Vliet, Major Stewart, 153.  
 Vera Cruz, Mexico, 29, 107, 356.  
 Vest, George G., 388.  
 Vicksburg, Miss., siege of, 234, 235, 239-268; sufferings in, 267; fall of, 269; 270, 273, 282.  
 Vigilantes, California, 144.  
 Virginia Military Institute, 161.
- WADE, BENJAMIN F., 278.  
 Wallace, Gen. Lew, 228.  
 Walnut Hills, Miss., 261, 262, 263, 266.  
 "War is hell," 309 n.  
 Ward, Ferdinand, 393.  
 Warren, U. S. sloop-of-war, 98.  
 Washington, Capt. Edward C., 261.  
 Washington, D. C., 12; Sherman on duty at, 198, 199; 204; peril of, 210, 211, 212; 217, 243; emissaries from, at Vicksburg, 256; Grant summoned to, 287; 324, 344, 345, 347, 348, 349, 351; Grand Review at, 354; 355, 357; Sherman summoned to, 360; 364, 365, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 374, 375; Sherman's dislike of, 376, 377; his headquarters as General at, 378; 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 397.  
 Watkins, Com., 139, 140.  
 Watts, Major, C. S. A., 246, 249.  
 Webster, Daniel, 7 n.  
 West Point, U. S. Military Academy, Sherman's life at, 1, 3-12, 385 n., 397.  
 Wheeler, Gen. Joseph, 279.  
 Wickliffe, Gov. Robert C., 173, 175.  
 Wilkes, Lt. Charles, U. S. N., 65, 79.  
 Wilmington, N. C., 332, 340.  
 Wilson, Gen. James H., 351.  
 Winthrop, R. C., 394, 395.  
 Wise, Elgee, 186.  
 Wise, Henry A., 57, 59, 60.  
 Women, bitter feeling of Southern 268.  
 Worth, Gen. William J., 19.







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